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SELECT DISCOURSES AND ESSAYS

W. E. CHANNING

To W. E. Channing.

THE pages of thy book I read,
And as I closed each one,
My heart, responding, ever said,
‘ Servant of God, well done !’

Well done ! thy words are great and bold ;
At times they seem to me,
Like Luther’s, in the days of old,
Half battles for the free !

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

SELECT DISCOURSES AND ESSAYS

FROM THE WORKS OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D.

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

W. COPELAND BOWIE



LONDON

PHILIP GREEN, 5, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.

1895

Two Shillings and Sixpence, net.

PRINTED BY ELSOM AND CO.
MARKET-PLACE, 'HULL.

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WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

BORN APRIL 7TH, 1780.

DIED OCTOBER 2ND, 1842.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the 'Life and Letters of Frederick W. Robertson,' by the Rev. Stopford Brooke, it is related that a pious Christian lady, on visiting the great Brighton preacher, expressed her dismay and horror at finding a copy of Channing's *Memoirs* lying on his drawing-room table; whereupon Robertson writes: 'I told her that if she and I ever got to heaven, we should find Dr. Channing revolving round the central Light in an orbit immeasurably nearer than ours, almost invisible to us, and lost in a blaze of light.' In the same letter he says: 'I should be very glad if half of those who recognise the hereditary claims of the Son of God to worship, bowed down before his moral dignity with an adoration half as profound, or a love half as enthusiastic, as Dr. Channing's.'

These generous and manly words were written in 1849, seven years after Channing's death, and they afford some indication of the deep impression which the life and works of the Unitarian preacher made upon many thoughtful Christians. Misunderstandings and misrepresentations have prevented, and still prevent, not a few excellent people from so much as turning over the pages of a book known to come from the pen of a Unitarian; but happily the writings of Dr. Channing,

like those of Dr. Martineau in our own day, have made a place for themselves in the affection and esteem of men of various creeds and churches. Thousands of copies of Dr. Channing's discourses and essays have been circulated throughout the civilized world, and the demand for them still continues. Preachers and teachers of all denominations find in his Sermons food for the sustenance of the deepest spiritual life. High dignitaries of the Episcopal Church, leading Nonconformist ministers, and village Lay-preachers, unite in bearing testimony to the instruction and inspiration which his pages have afforded them. During the last few years there has been quite a noteworthy demand for copies of the cheap edition of his works from local preachers, among the miners of Northumberland and Durham and other parts of the country, and this demand has largely necessitated the preparation of the present volume of Select Discourses and Essays.

William Ellery Channing was born at Newport, Rhode Island, U.S.A., on April 7th, 1780. He was called William after his father, an able and highly respected lawyer; Ellery was his mother's maiden name. There were nine children in all, and William Ellery was the third. He was carefully trained at home, and at school in Newport, and afterwards placed under the friendly roof of his uncle to prepare for admission to Harvard University. Meanwhile, in the midst of these preparations, when the boy was only thirteen years old, his father died. About a year later, in 1794, he became a student at Harvard, graduating in 1798. After leaving college, he accepted an engagement as tutor in a family at Richmond, Virginia, which lasted two years ;

and while there his ascetic and studious habits tended largely to undermine his health. On returning home, he spent some time helping his brothers in their studies, while he himself longed to enter the Divinity School at Cambridge, Massachusetts, in order to prepare himself for the ministry. The opportunity came early in 1802, and in June of the following year (the year in which Emerson was born), he accepted a call to a small, plain church in Federal Street, Boston. The scanty congregation gradually increased as the preacher became known; and, later on, a large, handsome church was built for him. For some years his mother and younger brothers and sisters shared his parsonage, until most of them were settled in life. In the summer of 1814 Channing married Ruth Gibbs, his cousin, whom he had known and loved from childhood.

The church in Federal Street was a Congregational place of worship, many of whose members had, doubtless, some leanings towards a liberal theology—in opposition to the Calvinism which the Puritans had brought over from England, and which was steadily losing its hold all over the State of Massachusetts. The rapidity with which these broader views were spreading brought consternation into the camp of the stricter ‘orthodoxy.’ A hue and cry was raised against the Unitarian heresy. William Ellery Channing personally disliked theological controversy, and would gladly have avoided it; but, in 1815, the antagonism and bitterness of denunciation displayed by ‘orthodox’ preachers and writers kindled his innate love of truth and freedom, and he bravely declared himself one of the despised and hated Unitarian heretics. An invitation to preach the ordination

sermon for Jared Sparks, at Baltimore, in 1819, gave him an opportunity of making a fearless and vigorous pronouncement on behalf of Unitarian Christianity. This was followed during the same year by a carefully reasoned paper on the 'Objections to Unitarian Christianity considered,' and, in 1826, by a discourse on 'Unitarian Christianity most favourable to piety.' So far as Massachusetts was concerned, the result of this controversy, largely owing to Channing's influence, was that the most cultivated minds, and the chief leaders of progress, cut themselves adrift from 'orthodoxy' and became Unitarian, though they did not always call themselves by that name. Harvard conferred the degree of D.D. upon him in 1821, while he was engaged in the exposition and defence of Unitarian Christianity. Dr. Channing had no desire to found a Unitarian sect or to establish a Unitarian orthodoxy. 'I take cheerfully,' he said, 'the name of a Unitarian. But were the name more honoured, I should be glad to throw it off. I wish to regard myself as belonging not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven.'

Dr. Channing, along with his wife, visited England in 1822, and made the acquaintance of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other poets and thinkers. It was Coleridge who, after meeting him, said: 'He has the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love.' He stood in sore need of the change and rest which the visit to Europe afforded, but he was glad to get back in the summer of 1823, to his home and work in Boston, that he might, as he tells us in his journal, 'be more watchful, temperate, kind, devout, than ever before.' From theo-

logical controversy he was plunged into another trying struggle,—the conflict with slavery and slave-owners. Dr. Channing did his best to bring about a just and peaceful settlement of the problem. With his deep-rooted faith in the dignity and worth of every individual human soul, he simply loathed slavery; but he desired to avoid rebellion and revolution, and was prepared to exercise prudence as well as patience in seeking to remove this terrible blot from the civilization of America. The earnestness and vigour, as well as the great intelligence, he brought to bear not only upon the question of slavery, but upon all kinds of social questions, may be gathered from the selections on Education, Temperance, War, and the Elevation of the Labouring Classes, which are included in this volume. To use his own words, he was ‘always young for liberty.’ He sought to implant ‘a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men’s relation to a common Father. Before this all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace.’

Dr. Channing died at Bennington, Vermont, U.S.A., October 2nd, 1842. The years of fruitful research that have passed away since his death have seen many changes in the life and thought of men inside and outside all the Churches. The scientific doctrine of Evolution, the newer criticism of the Bible, the knowledge and appreciative understanding of non-Christian religions, have very considerably modified the doctrinal and historic theology of all Churches, whether they are conscious of the change or not. The freedom from creeds and tests which has always characterised Uni-

Unitarians has naturally caused them to accept, more readily than most other Christians, views of God's methods of creation and of revelation which were not possible, because unknown, in the time of Dr. Channing. Any one who will compare the theological disquisitions of Dr. Channing, with those of Dr. Martineau, in his 'Seat of Authority in Religion,' will perceive that great changes have taken place in biblical study during the later half of the present century. Our claim for Dr. Channing is not that he was a profound philosopher, or a learned theologian, or an accomplished critic. His chief strength lay in the beauty and moral force of his personal character and teachings, which gave to Unitarianism a higher spiritual tone than it had ever before attained.

Dr. Channing believed in the evidential importance and value of Miracles; but the question of the miraculous held a much lower place with him than it did in the theology of Dr. Priestley; and certainly he was far as the poles removed from the conventional 'Apologist for God,' whom Dr. Martineau so neatly describes in the *Nineteenth Century* for April, 1895, 'who, on surveying the world and himself, finds such a godless look on the face of all things that he must open his case by proving the absolute *Necessity of a Revelation*, which he proceeds to effect by brow-beating Reason and Conscience out of their modest pleas and significant experiences; and then calling a group of prodigies into the witness-box on behalf of a religion at variance with both.' Channing never failed to lay the chief emphasis on the ethical and spiritual facts and experiences revealed and manifested in man's own nature; and he always kept the

door open for new ideas. In 1841, a year before his death, he said: 'Old Unitarianism must undergo important modifications or developments.' Dr. Channing never dreamt of formulating a system of biblical and dogmatic theology which admiring followers were bound to accept for all time.

The permanent and living elements in Dr. Channing's teachings are found in his discourses on the Religious Life. There he is seen at his best, and as he himself would wish to be represented; there he stands before us as the prophet of the soul, as the revealer of the Christianity that chastens and moulds and builds up character, that draws man into loving communion with God. There (to recur once more to a suggestive comparison) the author of 'The Perfect Life' occupies the same moral and spiritual point of view as the author of the 'Endeavours after the Christian Life.' Dr. Martineau, in his address at the Channing Centenary Meeting in London, in 1880, truly observes:—'In reviewing the history of this pure and powerful soul, it is easy, from its transparent simplicity, to alight upon the animating principle which constituted its unity and harmony throughout. The single thought of which, from first to last, it was the living expression is this, that *moral perfection is the essence of God, and the supreme end for man*; in the one, an eternal reality; in the other, a continuous possibility; in both, the ground of perpetual spiritual communion.' The progress of modern science and the results of modern criticism since Dr. Channing's days have, doubtless changed men's conception of the Bible as a final authority; the miraculous element in the Old and the New Testament, and special theories

of the supernatural mission and work of Christ, no longer hold the place which they held in the mind and heart of the Unitarians of Dr. Channing's time; but the great inspiring conceptions of moral and spiritual life which he expounded with such beauty and force are everywhere asserting themselves. The dignity and worth of human nature, the tokens of the Divine presence in the heart and soul of man, the unity of God, the communion of man with God,—these remain among the unshaken things of the spirit, and they are life. Evolution itself has only added deeper meaning and given a wider import to Dr. Channing's 'one sublime idea,' which he declared had taken a strong hold of his mind, and bound together all other truth:—'It is the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God—not by passive dependence, but by spiritual likeness—its receptiveness of his spirit, its self-forming power, its destination to ineffable glory, its immortality.' His last spoken words were: 'I have received many messages from the Spirit,'—words which fitly describe and round off his noble and saintly life.

On Sunday, October 9th, 1842, a week after his death, Theodore Parker spoke thus of Dr. Channing:—'It is not saying too much to declare, that no one of our century, in England or America, has done so much as he to set forth the greatness of man's nature, the loveliness of Jesus, and the goodness of God.'

It is because of their ethical and spiritual power that the writings of Channing still convey a much-needed message to our age,—an age harassed by doubt and yet seeking for light. He shows that it is possible to believe in God, to reverence Christ, to love and

serve our fellows, to face the unknown future with unflinching courage and divinest hope; and yet to keep the mind free to accept any newer truth, the heart open to any deeper affection, and the conscience eager to respond to any fresh call of duty, which the wisdom and goodness revealed in these later days may bring or claim.

The selections from Dr. Channing's works given in this volume are divided into three sections:—(1) *Controversial Theology*, in which will be found his famous Baltimore Sermon on Unitarian Christianity: a few passages, containing local and temporary allusions, have been omitted, otherwise these discourses are given in full.¹ (2) *Social Questions*, containing portions of his essays on Education, Slavery, War, and the Elevation of the Labouring Classes. (3) *The Religious Life*, sermons taken from 'The Perfect Life,' a delightful and inspiring book, published in 1873, thirty-one years after his death. To these are added a few brief extracts from various sources. Many noble and instructive utterances, which the editor would gladly have included, are omitted through lack of space.

W. C. B.

London, May 13th, 1895.

¹ In view of some of the things which were said about Unitarians prior to and during the London School Board Election, November, 1894, the protest on 'Exclusion and Denunciation in Religion,' though written by Dr. Channing so long ago as 1815, is evidently still needed.

[The following list of Books, Essays, and Tracts relating to Dr. Channing's life and work, may prove useful, and can be obtained at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.:—
COMPLETE WORKS, in one vol., American edition, 4/- net; English edition (small type), 2/6; English edition, large quarto, 7/6;
CENTENARY COMMEMORATION Volume, April 7th, 1880, 1/-;
THE PERFECT LIFE, 2/6;
THOUGHTS SELECTED FROM THE WRITINGS OF DR. CHANNING, 2/- net;
NOTE BOOK, Selections from unpublished MSS., by Grace E. Channing, 4/- net;
MEMOIR OF DR. CHANNING, by W. H. Channing, B.A., two vols. 7/6, in one vol., revised and abridged, 4/- net;
MEMOIR OF DR. CHANNING, by O. B. Frothingham, 8/- net;
THE STORY OF DR. CHANNING, written for young people, by Frances E. Cooke, 1/-;
SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF DR. CHANNING, by W. C. Gannett and Judson Fisher, 3d.;
SELF-CULTURE, by Dr. Channing, 3d.;
DR. CHANNING AND HIS WORK, by Brooke Herford, D.D., 2d.;
also the following Tracts:—**Christianity a Rational Religion** (1½d.), **Objections to the Trinitarian Doctrine of Salvation** (¾d.), **On Christian Worship** (2d.), **On Immortality** (1d.), **On Spiritual Freedom** (1½d.), **The Bondage of Creeds** (¾d.), **The Evil of Sin** (1d.), **The Future Life** (1d.), **Trinitarian Views not favourable to real piety** (1d.), **Unitarian Christianity** (1d.).]

I.
CONTROVERSIAL THEOLOGY

‘If controversy is ever to cease, it will not be by good-natured indifference to all earnest conviction, but by a sympathy profound enough to understand it ; by a charity, not of easy indulgence, but of genuine insight ; by a full trust in the *under-truth* that feeds the roots of all our faiths.’—JAMES MARFENAU.

‘Let our doctrines and our forms fit the soul, as the limbs fit the body, growing out of it, growing with it. Let us have a church for the whole man : truth for the mind ; good works for the hands ; love for the heart ; and for the soul that aspiring after perfection, that unfaltering faith in God which, like lightning in the clouds, shines brightest when elsewhere it is most dark.’ THEODORE PARKER.

EXCLUSION AND DENUNCIATION IN RELIGION.

(1815)

NOTHING is plainer than that the leaders of the party called 'Orthodox' have adopted and mean to enforce a system of exclusion in regard to Liberal Christians. They spare no pains to infect the minds of their too easy followers with the persuasion that they ought to refuse communion with their Unitarian brethren, and to deny them the name, character, and privileges of Christians. On this system I shall now offer several observations.

I begin with an important suggestion. I beg that it may be distinctly understood that the zeal of Liberal Christians on this point has no other object than the peace and prosperity of the church of Christ. We are pleading, not our own cause, but the cause of our Master. The denial of our Christian character by fallible and imperfect men gives us no anxiety. Our relation to Jesus Christ is not to be dissolved by the breath of man. Our Christian rights do not depend on human passions. We have precisely the same power over our brethren which they have over us, and are equally authorized to sever them from the body of Christ. Still more; if the possession of truth give superior weight to denunciation, we are persuaded that our opposers will be the severest sufferers, should

we think fit to hurl back the sentence of exclusion and condemnation. But we have no disposition to usurp power over our brethren. We believe that the spirit which is so studiously excited against ourselves has done incalculable injury to the cause of Christ, and we pray God to deliver us from its power.

Why are the name, character, and rights of Christians to be denied to Unitarians? Do they deny that Jesus is the Christ? Do they reject his word as the rule of their faith and practice? Do their lives discover indifference to his authority and example? No, these are not their offences. They are deficient in none of the qualifications of disciples, which were required in the primitive age. Their offence is, that they read the Scriptures for themselves, and derive from them different opinions on certain points, from those which others have adopted. Mistake of judgment is their pretended crime, and this crime is laid to their charge by men who are as liable to mistake as themselves, and who seem to them to have fallen into some of the grossest errors. A condemning sentence from such judges carries with it no terror. Sorrow for its uncharitableness, and strong disapprobation of its arrogance, are the principal feelings which it inspires.

It is truly astonishing, that Christians are not more impressed with the unbecoming spirit, the arrogant style, of those who deny the Christian character to professed and exemplary followers of Jesus Christ, because they differ in opinion on some of the most subtle and difficult subjects of theology. A stranger at hearing the language of these denouncers, would conclude, without a doubt, that they were clothed with infallibility, and were appointed to sit in judgment on their brethren. But, for myself, I know not a shadow of a pretence for the language of superiority assumed by our adversaries. Are they exempted from the common frailty of our nature? Has God given them superior

intelligence? Were they educated under circumstances more favourable to improvement than those whom they condemn? Have they brought to the Scriptures more serious, anxious, and unwearied attention? Or do their lives express a deeper reverence for God and for his Son? No. They are fallible, imperfect men, possessing no higher means, and no stronger motives for studying the word of God than their Unitarian brethren. And yet their language to them is virtually this: 'We pronounce you to be in error, and in most dangerous error. We know that we are right, and that you are wrong in regard to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel. You are unworthy the Christian name, and unfit to sit with us at the table of Christ. We offer you the truth, and you reject it at the peril of your souls.' Such is the language of humble Christians to men who, in capacity and apparent piety, are not inferior to themselves. This language has spread from the leaders through a considerable part of the community. Men in those walks of life which leave them without leisure or opportunities for improvement, are heard to decide on the most intricate points, and to pass sentence on men whose lives have been devoted to the study of the Scriptures! The female, forgetting the tenderness of her sex, and the limited advantages which her education affords for a critical study of the Scriptures, inveighs with bitterness against the damnable errors of such men as Newton, Locke, Clarke, and Price! The young, too, forget the modesty which belongs to their age, and hurl condemnation on the head which has grown grey in the service of God and mankind. Need I ask whether this spirit of denunciation for supposed error becomes the humble and fallible disciples of Jesus Christ?

In vindication of this system of exclusion and denunciation, it is often urged, that the 'honour of religion,' the 'purity of the church,' and the 'cause of truth,' forbid those who hold the true Gospel to main-

tain fellowship with those who support corrupt and injurious opinions. Without stopping to notice the modesty of those who claim an exclusive knowledge of the true Gospel, I would answer that the 'honour of religion' can never suffer by admitting to Christian fellowship men of irreproachable lives, whilst it has suffered most severely from that narrow and uncharitable spirit which has excluded such men for imagined errors. I answer again, that the 'cause of truth' can never suffer by admitting to Christian fellowship men who honestly profess to make the Scriptures their rule of faith and practice, whilst it has suffered most severely by substituting for this standard conformity to human creeds and formularies. It is truly wonderful, if excommunication for supposed error be the method of purifying the church, that the church has been so long and so woefully corrupted. Whatever may have been the deficiencies of Christians in other respects, they have certainly discovered no criminal reluctance in applying this instrument of purification. Could the thunders and lightnings of excommunication have corrected the atmosphere of the church, not one pestilential vapour would have loaded it for ages. The air of Paradise would not have been more pure, more refreshing. But what does history tell us? It tells us that the spirit of exclusion and denunciation has contributed more than all other causes to the corruption of the church, to the diffusion of error; and has rendered the records of the Christian community as black, as bloody, as revolting to humanity, as the records of empires founded on conquest and guilt.

But it is said, Did not the Apostle denounce the erroneous, and pronounce a curse on the 'abettors of another gospel'? This is the stronghold of the friends of denunciation. But let us never forget that the Apostles were inspired men, capable of marking out with unerring certainty those who substituted 'another

gospel' for the true. Show us their successors, and we will cheerfully obey them.

It is also important to recollect the character of those men against whom the Apostolic anathema was directed. They were men who knew distinctly what the Apostles taught, and yet opposed it; and who endeavoured to sow division, and to gain followers, in the churches which the Apostles had planted. These men, resisting the known instructions of the authorized and inspired teachers of the Gospel, and discovering a factious, selfish, mercenary spirit, were justly excluded as unworthy the Christian name. But what in common with these men have the Christians whom it is the custom of the 'Orthodox' to denounce? Do these oppose what they know to be the doctrine of Christ and his Apostles? Do they not revere Jesus and his inspired messengers? Do they not dissent from their brethren simply because they believe that their brethren dissent from their Lord? Let us not forget that the contest at the present day is not between the Apostles themselves and men who oppose their known instructions, but uninspired Christians who equally receive the Apostles as authorized teachers of the Gospel, and who only differ in judgment as to the interpretation of their writings. How unjust, then, is it for any class of Christians to confound their opponents with the factious and unprincipled sectarians of the primitive age! Mistake in judgment is the heaviest charge which one denomination has now a right to urge against another; and do we find that the Apostles ever denounced mistake as 'awful and fatal hostility' to the Gospel; that they pronounce anathemas on men who wished to obey, but who misapprehended their doctrines? The Apostles well remembered that none ever mistook more widely than themselves. They remembered, too, the lenity of their Lord towards their errors, and this lenity they cherished and laboured to diffuse.

But it is asked: Have not Christians a right to bear 'solemn testimony' against opinions which are 'utterly subversive of the Gospel, and most dangerous to men's eternal interests'? To this I answer, that the opinions of men who discover equal intelligence and piety with ourselves, are entitled to respectful consideration. If, after inquiry, they seem erroneous and injurious, we are authorized and bound, according to our ability, to expose, by fair and serious argument, their nature and tendency. But I maintain that we have no right as individuals, or in an associated capacity, to bear our 'solemn testimony' against these opinions, by menacing with ruin the Christian who listens to them, or by branding them with the most terrifying epithets, for the purpose of preventing candid inquiry into their truth. This is the fashionable mode of 'bearing testimony,' and it is a weapon which will always be most successful in the hands of the proud, the positive, and overbearing, who are most impatient of contradiction, and have least regard to the rights of their brethren.

But whatever may be the right of Christians, as to bearing testimony against opinions which they deem injurious, I deny that they have any right to pass a condemning sentence, on account of these opinions, on the characters of men whose general deportment is conformed to the Gospel of Christ. Both Scripture and reason unite in teaching that the best and only standard of character is the life; and he who overlooks the testimony of a Christian life, and grounds a sentence of condemnation on opinions about which he, as well as his brother, may err, violates most flagrantly the duty of just and candid judgment, and opposes the peaceful and charitable spirit of the Gospel. Jesus Christ says, 'By their fruits shall ye know them.' 'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he who doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.' 'Ye are my friends, if ye do what-

soever I command you.' 'He that heareth and doeth these my sayings,' i.e., the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, 'I will liken him to a man who built his house upon a rock.' It would be easy to multiply similar passages. The whole Scriptures teach us that he and he only is a Christian whose life is governed by the precepts of the Gospel, and that by this standard alone the profession of this religion should be tried. We do not deny that our brethren have a right to form a judgment as to our Christian character. But we insist that we have a right to be judged by the fairest, the most approved, and the most settled rules by which character can be tried; and when these are overlooked, and the most uncertain standard is applied, we are injured; and an assault on character which rests on this ground deserves no better name than defamation and persecution.

I know that this suggestion of persecution will be indignantly repelled by those who deal most largely in denunciation. But persecution is a wrong or injury inflicted for opinions; and surely assaults on character fall under this definition. Some persons seem to think that persecution consists in pursuing error with fire and sword; and that, therefore, it has ceased to exist, except in distempered imaginations, because no class of Christians among us is armed with these terrible weapons. But no. The form is changed, but the spirit lives. Persecution has given up its halter and fagot, but it breathes venom from its lips, and secretly blasts what it cannot openly destroy. For example, a liberal minister, however circumspect in his walk, irreproachable in all his relations, no sooner avows his honest convictions on some of the most difficult subjects than his name begins to be a by-word. A thousand suspicions are infused into his hearers; and it is insinuated that he is a minister of Satan, in 'the guise of an angel of light.' At a little distance from his home, calumny

assumes a bolder tone. He is pronounced an infidel, and it is gravely asked whether he believes in a God. At a greater distance, his morals are assailed. He is a man of the world, 'leading souls to hell,' to gratify the most selfish passions. But, notwithstanding all this, he must not say a word about persecution, for reports like these rack no limbs; they do not even injure a hair of his head; and how then is he persecuted?—Now, for myself, I am as willing that my adversary should take my purse or my life, as that he should rob me of my reputation, rob me of the affection of my friends and of my means of doing good. 'He who takes from me my good name,' takes the best possession of which human power can deprive me. It is true that a Christian's reputation is comparatively a light object; and so is his property, so is his life; all are light things to him whose hope is full of immortality. But, of all worldly blessings, an honest reputation is to many of us the most precious; and he who robs us of it is the most injurious of mankind, and among the worst of persecutors. Let not the friends of denunciation attempt to escape this charge by pleading their sense of duty, and their sincere desire to promote the cause of truth. St. Dominic was equally sincere when he built the Inquisition; and I doubt not that many torturers of Christians have fortified their reluctant minds, at the moment of applying the rack and the burning iron, by the sincere conviction that the cause of truth required the sacrifice of its foes. I beg that these remarks may not be applied indiscriminately to the party called 'Orthodox,' among whom are multitudes whose frailty and charity would revolt from making themselves the standards of Christian piety, and from assailing the Christian character of their brethren.

Many other considerations may be added to those which have been already urged, against the system of excluding from Christian fellowship men of upright

lives, on account of their opinions. It necessarily generates perpetual discord in the church. Men differ in opinions as much as in features. No two minds are perfectly accordant. The shades of belief are infinitely diversified. Amidst this immense variety of sentiment, every man is right in his own eyes. Every man discovers errors in the creed of his brother. Every man is prone to magnify the importance of his own peculiarities, and to discover danger in the peculiarities of others. This is human nature. Every man is partial to his own opinions because they are his own, and his self-will and pride are wounded by contradiction. Now what must we expect when beings so erring, so divided in sentiment, and so apt to be unjust to the views of others, assert the right of excluding one another from the Christian church on account of imagined error? as the Scriptures confine this right to no individual and to no body of Christians, it belongs alike to all; and what must we expect when Christians of all capacities and dispositions, the ignorant, prejudiced, and self-conceited, imagine it their duty to prescribe opinions to Christendom, and to open or to shut the door of the church according to the decision which their neighbours may form on some of the most perplexing points of theology? This question, unhappily, has received answer upon answer in ecclesiastical history. We there see Christians denouncing and excommunicating one another for supposed error, until every denomination has been pronounced accursed by some portion of the Christian world; so that were the curses of men to prevail, not one human being would enter heaven. To me, it appears that to plead for the right of excluding men of blameless lives, on account of their opinions, is to sound the peal of perpetual and universal war. Arm men with this power, and we shall have 'nothing but thunder.' Some persons are sufficiently simple to imagine that if this 'horrid Unitarianism' were once

hunted down, and put quietly into its grave, the church would be at peace. But no: our present contests have their origin, not in the 'enormities' of Unitarianism, but very much in the principles of human nature, in the love of power, in impatience of contradiction, in men's passion for imposing their own views upon others, in the same causes which render them anxious to make proselytes to all their opinions. Were Unitarianism quietly interred, another and another hideous form of error would start up before the zealous guardians of the 'purity of the church.'

Another argument against this practice of denouncing the supposed errors of sincere professors of Christianity, is this. It exalts to supremacy in the church men who have the least claim to influence. Humble, meek, and affectionate Christians are least disposed to make creeds for their brethren, and to denounce those who differ from them. On the contrary, the impetuous, proud, and enthusiastic, men who cannot or will not weigh the arguments of opponents, are always most positive and most unsparing in denunciation. These take the lead in a system of exclusion. They have no false modesty, no false charity, to shackle their zeal in framing fundamentals for their brethren, and in punishing the obstinate in error. The consequence is that creeds are formed which exclude from Christ's church some of his truest followers, which outrage reason as well as revelation, and which subsequent ages are obliged to mutilate and explain away, lest the whole religion be rejected by men of reflection. Such has been the history of the church. It is strange that we do not learn wisdom from the past. What man, who feels his own fallibility, who sees the errors into which the positive and 'orthodox' of former times have been betrayed, and who considers his own utter inability to decide on the degree of truth which every mind, of every capacity, must receive in order to salvation, will

not tremble at the responsibility of prescribing to his brethren, in his own words; the views they must maintain on the most perplexing subjects of religion? Humility will always leave this work to others.

Another important consideration is, that this system of excluding men of apparent sincerity, for their opinions, entirely subverts free inquiry into the Scriptures. When once a particular system is surrounded by this bulwark; when once its defenders have brought the majority to believe that the rejection of it is a mark of depravity and perdition, what but the name of liberty is left to Christians? The obstacles to inquiry are as real, and may be as powerful, as in the neighbourhood of the Inquisition. The multitude dare not think, and the thinking dare not speak. The right of private judgment may thus, in a Protestant country, be reduced to a nullity. It is true that men are sent to the Scriptures; but they are told before they go that they will be driven from the church on earth and in heaven, unless they find in the Scriptures the doctrines which are embodied in the popular creed. They are told, indeed, to inquire for themselves; but they are also told at what points inquiry must arrive; and the sentence of exclusion hangs over them if they happen to stray, with some of the best and wisest men, into forbidden paths. Now this 'Protestant liberty' is, in one respect, more irritating than Papal bondage. It mocks as well as enslaves us. It talks to us courteously as friends and brethren whilst it rivets our chains. It invites and even charges us to look with our own eyes, but with the same breath warns us against seeing anything which orthodox eyes have not seen before. Is this a state of things favourable to serious inquiry into the truths of the Gospel? yet how long has the church been groaning under this cruel yoke!

The time is come when the friends of Christian liberty and Christian charity are called to awake, and to remember their duties to themselves, to posterity, and to

the church of Christ. • The time is come when the rights of conscience and the freedom of our churches 'must be defended with zeal. The time is come when menace and denunciation must be met with a spirit which will show that we dread not the frowns and lean not on the favour of man. The time is come when every expression of superiority on the part of our brethren should be repelled as criminal usurpation. But, in doing this, let the friends of liberal and genuine Christianity remember the spirit of their religion. Let no passion or bitterness dishonour their sacred cause. In contending for the Gospel, let them not lose its virtues or forfeit its promises.—We are indeed called to pass through one of the severest trials of human virtue, the trial of controversy. We should carry with us a sense of its danger. Religion, when made a subject of debate, seems often to lose its empire over the heart and life. The mild and affectionate spirit of Christianity gives place to angry recriminations and cruel surmises. Fair dealing, uprightness, and truth are exchanged for the arts of sophistry. The devotional feelings, too, decline in warmth and tenderness. Let us, then, watch and pray. Let us take heed that the weapons of our warfare be not carnal. Whilst we repel usurpation, let us be just to the general rectitude of many by whom our Christian rights are invaded. Whilst we repel the uncharitable censures of men, let us not forget the deep humility and sense of unworthiness with which we should ever appear before God. In our zeal to maintain the great truth, that our Father in Heaven is alone the supreme God, let us not neglect that intercourse with Him without which the purest conceptions will avail little to en throne Him in our hearts. In our zeal to hold fast the 'word of Christ,' in opposition to human creeds and formularies, let us not forget that our Lord demands another and a still more unsuspicious confession of him, even the exhibition of his spirit and religion in our lives.

The controversy in which we are engaged is indeed painful ; but it was not chosen, but forced upon us, and we ought to regard it as a part of the discipline to which a wise Providence has seen fit to subject us. Like all other trials, it is designed to promote our moral perfection. I trust, too, that it is designed to promote the cause of truth. Whilst I would speak diffidently of the future, I still hope that a brighter day is rising on the Christian church, than it has yet enjoyed. The Gospel is to shine forth in its native glory. The violent excitement by which some of the corruptions of this divine system are now supported, cannot be permanent ; and the uncharitableness with which they are enforced will react, like the persecutions of the Church of Rome, in favour of truth. Already we have the comfort of seeing many disposed to inquire, and to inquire without that terror which has bound as with a spell so many minds. We doubt not that this inquiry will result in a deep conviction that Christianity is yet disfigured by errors which have been transmitted from ages of darkness. Of this, at least, we are sure, that inquiry, by discovering to men the difficulties and obscurities which attend the present topics of controversy, will terminate in what is infinitely more desirable than doctrinal concord—in the diffusion of a mild, candid, and charitable temper.

UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY.

(1819)

‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.’—
1 THESS. v. 21.

THE peculiar circumstances of this occasion¹ not only justify, but seem to demand, a departure from the course generally followed by preachers at the introduction of a brother into the sacred office. It is usual to speak of the nature, design, duties, and advantages of the Christian ministry; and on these topics I should now be happy to insist, did I not remember that a minister is to be given this day to a religious society whose peculiarities of opinion have drawn upon them much remark, and, may I not add, much reproach? Many good minds, many sincere Christians, I am aware, are apprehensive that the solemnities of this day are to give a degree of influence to principles which they deem false and injurious. The fears and anxieties of such men I respect; and, believing that they are grounded in part on mistake, I have thought it my duty to lay before you, as clearly as I can, some of the distinguishing opinions of that class of Christians in our country who are known to sympathize with this religious society. I must ask your patience, for such a subject is not to be despatched

¹ Preached at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, at Baltimore, U.S.A., 5th May, 1819.

in a narrow compass. I must also ask you to remember that it is impossible to exhibit, in a single discourse, our views of every doctrine of Revelation, much less the differences of opinion which are known to subsist among ourselves. I shall confine myself to topics on which our sentiments have been misrepresented, or which distinguish us most widely from others. May I not hope to be heard with candour? God deliver us all from prejudice and unkindness, and fill us with the love of truth and virtue!

• There are two natural divisions under which my thoughts will be arranged. I shall endeavour to unfold, 1st, The principles which we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures. And 2ndly, Some of the doctrines which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

1. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the New Testament. The dispensation of Moses compared with that of Jesus, we consider as adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only Master of Christians, and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry or by his inspired Apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be

ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians in whose name I speak need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind are circulated so freely, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books. We believe that God, when He speaks to the human race, conforms, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more than if communicated in an unknown tongue?

Now all books, and all conversation require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; or their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations; and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances, and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idioms of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings; and a man whose words we should explain without reference to these principles would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candour, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own, did it consist of words which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles

now laid down. We could not reason about it as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The Word of God bears the stamp of the same hand which we see in his works. It has infinite connections and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself—such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language by the known truths which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connections, we may observe, that its style nowhere affects the precision of science or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold, and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continual exercise of judgment. We find, too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to the times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times and places what was of temporary and local application.— We find, too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective

writers, that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the Apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds, and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually, to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject and the aim of the writer his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

Need I descend to particulars to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason? Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to Him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ, that he came not to send peace but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh and drink his blood we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, and pluck out the right eye; and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect the verbal contradiction between Paul and James, and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely; and who does not see that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connections?

Enough has been said to show in what sense we make use of reason in interpreting Scripture. From

a variety of possible interpretations we select that which accords with the nature of the subject and the state of the writer, with the connection of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts in one part of Scripture what He teaches in another ; and never contradicts in revelation what He teaches in his works and providence. And we therefore distrust every interpretation which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians do about the constitution under which we live ; who, you know, are accustomed to limit one provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to fix the precise import of its parts by inquiring into its general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies.

We do not announce these principles as original, or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them, not excepting those who most vehemently decry them when they happen to menace some favourite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their warfare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason when it can be pressed into the service of their own party, and only complain of it when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than those from whom we differ. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents ; and how ingeniously they extract from de-

tached passages mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our adversaries, because it leads, we believe, to universal scepticism. If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall that its most decisive judgments on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the sceptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over every truth. We honour revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers.

We indeed grant that the use of reason in religion is accompanied with danger. But we ask any honest man to look back on the history of the church, and say whether the renunciation of it be not still more dangerous? Besides, it is a plain fact that men reason as erroneously on all subjects as on religion. Who does not know the wild and groundless theories which have been framed in physical and political science? But who ever supposed that we must cease to exercise reason on nature and society because men have erred for ages in explaining them? We grant that the passions continually, and sometimes fatally, disturb the rational faculty in its inquiries into revelation. The ambitious

contrive to find doctrines in the Bible which favour their love of dominion. The timid and dejected discover there a gloomy system, and the mystical and fanatical a visionary theology. The vicious can find examples or assertions on which to build the hope of a late repentance, or of acceptance on easy terms. The falsely refined contrive to light on doctrines which have not been soiled by vulgar handling. But the passions do not distract the reason in religious any more than in other inquiries which excite strong and general interest; and this faculty, of consequence, is not to be renounced in religion, unless we are prepared to discard it universally. The true inference from the almost endless errors which have darkened theology is, not that we are to neglect and disparage our powers, but to exert them more patiently, circumspectly, uprightly; the worst errors, after all, having sprung up in that church which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of the darkest times, when the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril. Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. We may wish, in our sloth, that God had given us a system demanding no labour of comparing, limiting, and inferring. But such a system would be at variance with the whole character of our present existence; and it is the part of wisdom, to take revelation as it is given to us, and to interpret it by the help of the faculties which it everywhere supposes, and on which it is founded.

To the views now given an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will

surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a teacher we ought to expect propositions which we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away, but to believe, and adore, and to submit our weak and carnal reason to the Divine Word. To this objection we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom should expose those whom he would teach to infinite error. But if once we admit that propositions which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the belief of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can always quote passages that, in their literal and obvious sense, give support to its extravagances? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the submission of reason, now contended for, be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truth of revelation? For if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another, and the proposition that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a verity.

We answer again, that if God be infinitely wise, He cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. A wise teacher discovers his wisdom in adapting himself to the capacities of his pupils, not in perplexing them with what is unintelligible, not in distressing them with apparent contradictions, not in filling them with a sceptical distrust of their own powers. An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds and the best method of enlightening them, will surpass all other instructors in bringing down truth to our apprehension, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. We ought, indeed, to expect occasional obscurity in such a book as the Bible, which was written for past

and future ages as well as for the present. But God's wisdom is a pledge that whatever is necessary for us, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken, and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind. It is not the mark of wisdom to use an unintelligible phraseology, to communicate what is above our capacities, to confuse and unsettle the intellect by appearances of contradiction. We honour our Heavenly Teacher too much to ascribe to Him such a revelation. A revelation is a gift of light. It cannot thicken our darkness and multiply our perplexities.

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

(1.) In the first place, we believe in the doctrine of God's *unity*, or that there is one God, and one only. To this truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition that there is one God seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between being and person which the sagacity of later ages has discovered. We find no intimation that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, of that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that, whilst acknowledging in words, it subverts in effect, the unity

of God. According to this doctrine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not Himself sent; nor is He conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here, then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and if this mark fails us our whole knowledge falls; we have no proof that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do, then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. 'To us,' as to the Apostle and the primitive Christians, 'there is one God, even the Father.' With Jesus, we worship the Father as the only living and true God. We are

astonished that any man can read the New Testament and avoid the conviction that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title. 'God sent his Son.' 'God anointed Jesus.' Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which fills the New Testament, if this title belong equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connection, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

This doctrine, were it true, must, from its difficulty, singularity, and importance, have been laid down with great clearness, guarded with great care, and stated with all possible precision. But where does this statement appear? From the many passages which treat of God, we ask for one, one only, in which we are told that He is a threefold being, or that He is three persons, or that He is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the contrary in the New Testament, where, at least, we might expect many express assertions of this nature, God is declared to be one, without the least attempt to prevent the acceptance of the words in their common sense; and He is always spoken of and addressed in the singular number, that is, in language which was universally understood to intend a single person, and to which no other idea could have been attached without an express admonition. So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the Trinity, that when our opponents would insert it into their creeds and doxologies,

they are compelled to leave the Bible, and to invent forms of words altogether unsanctioned by Scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misapprehension, so fundamental as this is said to be, and requiring such careful exposition, should be left so undefined and unprotected, to be made out by inference, and to be hunted through distant and detached parts of Scripture—this is a difficulty which, we think, no ingenuity can explain.

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the Trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamour. Now, how happens it that in the apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not one word is said implying that objections were brought against the Gospel from the doctrine of the Trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded that, had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus who had lately died on a cross, this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labour of the Apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity on that account reaches our ears from the apostolic age. In the Epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the Trinity.

We have further objections to this doctrine, drawn from its practical influence. We regard it as unfavourable to devotion, by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God. It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration, and love. One Infinite Father, one Being of beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, in whom all our powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts. True piety when directed to an undivided Deity has a chasteness, a singleness, most favourable to religious awe and love. Now, the Trinity sets before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration; three infinite persons, having equal claims on our hearts; three divine agents, performing different offices, and to be acknowledged and worshipped in different relations. And is it possible, we ask, that the weak and limited mind of man can attach itself to these with the same power and joy as to One Infinite Father, the only First Cause, in whom all the blessings of nature and redemption meet as their centre and source? Must not devotion be distracted by the equal and rival claims of three equal persons, and must not the worship of the conscientious, consistent Christian be disturbed by an apprehension lest he withhold from one or another of these his due proportion of homage?

We also think, that the doctrine of the Trinity injures devotion, not only by joining to the Father other objects of worship, but by taking from the Father the supreme affection which is his due, and transferring it to the Son. This is a most important view. That Jesus Christ, if exalted into the infinite Divinity, should be more interesting than the Father, is precisely what might be expected from history, and from the principles of human nature. Men want an object of worship like themselves, and the great secret of idolatry lies in this

propensity. As God, clothed in our form and feeling our wants and sorrows, speaks to our weak nature more strongly than a Father in heaven, a pure spirit, invisible and unapproachable, save by the reflecting and purified mind. We think, too, that the peculiar offices ascribed to Jesus by the popular theology, make him the most attractive person in the Godhead. The Father is the depositary of the justice, the vindicator of the rights, the avenger of the laws of the Divinity. On the other hand, the Son, the brightness of the divine mercy, stands between the incensed Deity and guilty humanity, exposes his meek head to the storms, and his compassionate breast to the sword of the divine justice, bears our whole load of punishment, and purchases with his blood every blessing which descends from heaven. Need we state the effect of these representations, especially on common minds, for whom Christianity was chiefly designed, and whom it seeks to bring to the Father as the loveliest being? We do believe that the worship of a bleeding, suffering God tends strongly to absorb the mind, and to draw it from other objects, just as the human tenderness of the Virgin Mary has given her so conspicuous a place in the devotions of the Church of Rome. We believe, too, that this worship, though attractive, is not most fitted to spiritualize the mind, that it awakens human transport rather than that deep veneration of the moral perfections of God which is the essence of piety.

(2.) Having thus given our views of the unity of God, I proceed, in the second place, to observe that we believe in the *unity of Jesus Christ*. We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the Trinity, that, not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption

of Christianity, alike repugnant to common sense and to the general strain of Scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth of Jesus.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ, instead of being one mind, one conscious intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty: the one ignorant, the other omniscient. Now we maintain that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him made up of two minds infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conceptions of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of these two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have, in fact, no common properties. The divine mind feels none of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human is infinitely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings in the universe more distinct? We have always thought that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other, this we think an enormous tax on human credulity.

We say that if a doctrine so strange, so difficult, so remote from all the previous conceptions of men, be indeed a part, and an essential part, of revelation, it must be taught with great distinctness, and we ask our brethren to point to some plain, direct passage, where Christ is said to be composed of two minds infinitely different, yet constituting one person. We find none. Other Christians, indeed, tell us that this doctrine is necessary to the harmony of the Scriptures, that some texts ascribe to Jesus Christ human, and others divine

properties, and that to reconcile these we must suppose two minds, to which these properties may be referred. In other words, for the purpose of reconciling certain difficult passages, which a just criticism can in a great degree, if not wholly, explain, we must invent an hypothesis vastly more difficult, and involving gross absurdity. We are to find our way out of a labyrinth by a clue which conducts us into mazes infinitely more inextricable.

Surely, if Jesus Christ felt that he consisted of two minds, and that this was a leading feature of his religion, his phraseology respecting himself would have been coloured by this peculiarity. The universal language of men is framed upon the idea that one person is one person, is one mind, and one soul; and when the multitude heard this language from the lips of Jesus, they must have taken it in its usual sense, and must have referred to a single soul all which he spoke, unless expressly instructed to interpret it differently. But where do we find this instruction? Where do you meet, in the New Testament, the phraseology which abounds in Trinitarian books, and which necessarily grows from the doctrine of two natures in Jesus? Where does this divine teacher say, 'This I speak as God, and this as man; this is true only of my human mind, this only of my divine?' Where do we find in the Epistles a trace of this strange phraseology? Nowhere. It was not needed in that day. It was demanded by the errors of a later age.

We believe, then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and, I add, a being distinct from the one God. That Christ is not the one God, not the same being with the Father, is a necessary inference from our former head, in which we saw that the doctrine of three persons in God is a fiction. But on so important a subject I would add a few remarks. We wish that those from whom we differ would weigh one striking fact. Jesus, in his

preaching, continually spoke of God. 'The' word was always in his mouth. We ask, does he by this word ever mean himself? We say, never. On the contrary, he most plainly distinguishes between God and himself, and so do his disciples. How this is to be reconciled with the idea that the manifestation of Christ, as God, was a primary object of Christianity, our adversaries must determine.

If we examine the passages in which Jesus is distinguished from God, we shall see that they not only speak of him as another being, but seem to labour to express his inferiority. He is continually spoken of as the Son of God, sent of God, receiving all his powers from God, working miracles because God was with him, judging justly because God taught him, having claims on our belief because he was anointed and sealed by God, and as able of himself to do nothing. The New Testament is filled with this language. Now we ask what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Could any who heard it have imagined that Jesus was the very God to whom he was so industriously declared to be inferior; the very Being by whom he was sent, and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered, that the human birth, and bodily form, and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most unqualified manner, the language in which his inferiority to God was declared. Why, then, was this language used so continually, and without limitation, if Jesus were the Supreme Deity, and if this truth were an essential part of his religion? I repeat it, the human condition and sufferings of Christ tended strongly to exclude from men's minds the idea of his proper Godhead; and, of course, we should expect to find in the New Testament perpetual care and effort to counteract this tendency, to hold him forth as the same being with

his Father, if this doctrine were, as is pretended, the soul and centre of his religion. We should expect to find the phraseology of Scripture cast into the mould of this doctrine, to hear familiarly of God the Son, of our Lord God Jesus, and to be told that to us there is one God, even Jesus. But, instead of this, the inferiority of Christ pervades the New Testament. It is not only implied in the general phraseology, but repeatedly and decidedly expressed, and unaccompanied with any admonition to prevent its application to his whole nature. Could it, then, have been the great design of the sacred writers to exhibit Jesus as the Supreme God?

I am aware that these remarks will be met by two or three texts in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say that it is one of the most established and obvious principles, of criticism, that language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows that the same words convey very different ideas when used in relation to different beings. Thus, Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the architect whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now we maintain that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings, and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices,—these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages which are thought to make him the Supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to

be filled with all God's fulness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the most obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings to whom they relate; and we maintain that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ.

Trinitarians profess to derive some important advantages from their mode of viewing Christ. It furnishes them, they tell us, with an infinite atonement, for it shows them an infinite being suffering for their sins. The confidence with which this fallacy is repeated astonishes us. When pressed with the question whether they really believe that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and died on the cross, they acknowledge that this is not true, but that Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we, then, an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction.

We are also told that Christ is a more interesting object, that his love and mercy are more felt, when he is viewed as the Supreme God, who left his glory to take humanity and to suffer for men. That Trinitarians are strongly moved by this representation, we do not mean to deny; but we think their emotions altogether founded on a misapprehension of their own doctrines. They talk of the second person of the Trinity's leaving his glory and his Father's bosom to visit and save the world. But this second person, being the unchangeable and infinite God, was evidently incapable of parting with the least degree of his perfection and felicity. At the moment of his taking flesh, he was as intimately present with his Father as before, and equally with his Father filled heaven, and earth, and immensity.

This Trinitarians acknowledge; and still they profess to be touched and overwhelmed by the amazing humiliation of this immutable being! But not only does their doctrine, when fully explained, reduce Christ's humiliation to a fiction, it almost wholly destroys the impressions with which his cross ought to be viewed. According to their doctrine, Christ was comparatively no sufferer at all. It is true, his human mind suffered; but this, they tell us, was an infinitely small part of Jesus, bearing no more proportion to his whole nature than a single hair of our heads to the whole body, or than a drop to the ocean. The divine mind of Christ, that which was most properly himself, was infinitely happy at the very moment of the suffering of his humanity. Whilst hanging on the cross, he was the happiest being in the universe, as happy as the infinite Father; so that his pains, compared with his felicity, were nothing. This Trinitarians do, and must, acknowledge. It follows necessarily from the immutableness of the divine nature which they ascribe to Christ; so that their system, justly viewed, robs his death of interest, weakens our sympathy with his sufferings, and is, of all others, most unfavourable to a love of Christ, founded on a sense of his sacrifices for mankind. We esteem our own views to be vastly more affecting. It is our belief that Christ's humiliation was real and entire, that the whole Saviour, and not a part of him, suffered, that his crucifixion was a scene of deep and unmixed agony. As we stand round his cross, our minds are not distracted, nor our sensibility weakened, by contemplating him as composed of incongruous and infinitely differing minds, and as having a balance of infinite felicity. We recognise in the dying Jesus but one mind. This, we think, renders his sufferings, and his patience and love in bearing them, incomparably more impressive and affecting than the system we oppose.

(3.). Having thus given our belief on two great points, namely, that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is a being distinct from and inferior to God, I now proceed to another point, on which we lay still greater stress. We believe in *the moral perfection of God*. We consider no part of theology so important as that which treats of God's moral character; and we value our views of Christianity chiefly as they assert his amiable and venerable attributes.

It may be said that in regard to this subject all Christians agree, that all ascribe to the Supreme Being infinite justice, goodness, and holiness. We reply, that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of Him meanly; to apply to his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government principles which make Him odious. The Heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God by their general language, for in all ages they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt as if He were raised, by his greatness and sovereignty, above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude to which all other beings are subjected. We believe that in no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perceptions of rectitude; and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because He is our Creator merely, but because He created us for good and holy purposes; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance.

We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs tyrannically. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity and goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition as well as in act, good not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe, too, that God is just: but we never forget that this justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony, with perfect benevolence. By this attribute we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments, as are best fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes, for this end alone; and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably conjoined.

God's justice, thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement of infinite wisdom. To us they seem to be intimate friends, always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy, we understand not a blind instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. This, we acknowledge, would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence. God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but only through

their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice. It defers punishment, and suffers long, that the sinner may return to his duty, but leaves the impenitent and unyielding to the fearful retribution threatened in God's Word.

To give our views of God in one word, we believe in his parental character. We ascribe to Him not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that He has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which He is training men by prosperity and adversity, by aids and obstructions, by conflicts of reason and passion, by motives to duty and temptations to sin, by a various discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with Himself, and for a sublime and ever-growing virtue in heaven.

Now, we object to the systems of religion which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honourable views of God; that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for Him a being whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system which arrogates to itself the name of Orthodoxy, and which is now industriously propagated through our country. This system indeed takes various shapes, but in all it casts dishonour on the Creator. According to its old and genuine form, it teaches that God brings us into life wholly depraved, so that, under the innocent features of our childhood is hidden a nature averse to all good and propense to all evil, a nature which exposes us to God's displeasure and wrath, even before we have acquired

power to understand our duties or to reflect upon our actions. According to a more modern exposition, it teaches that we came from the hands of our Maker with such a constitution, and are placed under such influences and circumstances, as to render certain and infallible the total depravity of every human being from the first moment of his moral agency; and it also teaches that the offence of the child, who brings into life this ceaseless tendency to unmingled crime, exposes him to the sentence of everlasting damnation. Now, according to the plainest principles of morality we maintain that a natural constitution of the mind, unfailingly disposing it to evil, and to evil alone, would absolve it from guilt; that to give existence under this condition would argue unspeakable cruelty; and that to punish the sin of this unhappily constituted child with endless ruin, would be a wrong unparalleled by the most merciless despotism.

This system also teaches that God selects from this corrupt mass a number to be saved, and plucks them, by a special influence, from the common ruin; that the rest of mankind, though left without that special grace which their conversion requires, are commanded to repent, under penalty of aggravated woe; and that forgiveness is promised them on terms which their very constitution infallibly disposes them to reject, and in rejecting which they awfully enhance the punishments of hell. These proffers of forgiveness and exhortations of amendment, to beings born under a blighting curse, fill our minds with a horror which we want words to express.

That this religious system does not produce all the effects on character which might be anticipated, we most joyfully admit. It is often, very often, counteracted by nature, conscience, common sense, by the general strain of Scripture, by the mild example and precepts of Christ, and by the many positive declara-

tions of God's universal kindness and perfect equity. But still we think that we see its unhappy influence. It tends to discourage the timid, to give excuses to the bad, to feed the vanity of the fanatical, and to offer shelter to the bad feelings of the malignant. By shocking, as it does, the fundamental principles of morality, and by exhibiting a severe and partial Deity, it tends strongly to pervert the moral faculty, to form a gloomy, forbidding, and servile religion, and to lead men to substitute censoriousness, bitterness, and persecution for a tender and impartial charity. We think, too, that this system, which begins with degrading human nature, may be expected to end in pride; for pride grows out of a consciousness of high distinctions, however obtained, and no distinction is so great as that which is made between the elected and abandoned of God.

The false and dishonourable views of God which have now been stated, we feel ourselves bound to resist unceasingly. Other errors we can pass over with comparative indifference. But we ask our opponents to leave to us a God worthy of our love and trust, in whom our moral sentiments may delight, in whom our weaknesses and sorrows may find refuge. We cling to the Divine perfections. We meet them everywhere in creation, we read them in the Scriptures, we see a lovely image of them in Jesus Christ; and gratitude, love, and veneration call on us to assert them. Reproached, as we often are, by men, it is our consolation and happiness that one of our chief offences is the zeal with which we vindicate the dishonoured goodness and rectitude of God.

(4.) Having thus spoken of the unity of God; of the unity of Jesus, and his inferiority to God; and of the perfections of the Divine character; I now proceed to give our views of the *mediation of Christ*, and of the purposes of his mission. With regard to

the great object which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe that he was sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind ; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity, and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods ; by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from idolatry and impiety, to the knowledge, love, and obedience of the Creator ; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those who labour for progress in moral excellence ; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty ; by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken as well as guide us to perfection ; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt ; by his glorious discoveries of immortality ; by his sufferings and death ; by that signal event, the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses a future life ; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings ; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards promised to the faithful.

We have no desire to conceal the fact, that a difference of opinion exists among us in regard to an interesting part of Christ's mediation ; I mean, in regard to the precise influence of his death on our forgiveness. Many suppose that this event contributes to our pardon, as it was a principal means of confirming his religion, and of giving it a power over the mind ; in other words, that it procures forgiveness by leading to that repentance and virtue which is the great and only condition on which forgiveness is bestowed. Many of

us are dissatisfied with this explanation, and think that the Scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar, that we ought to consider this event as having a special influence in removing punishment, though the Scriptures may not reveal the way in which it contributes to this end.

Whilst, however, we differ in explaining the connection between Christ's death and human forgiveness, a connection which we all gratefully acknowledge, we agree in rejecting many sentiments which prevail in regard to his mediation. The idea which is conveyed to common minds by the popular system, that Christ's death has an influence in making God placable or merciful, in awakening his kindness towards men, we reject with strong disapprobation. We are happy to find that this very dishonourable notion is disowned by intelligent Christians of that class from which we differ. We recollect, however, that not long ago it was common to hear of Christ as having died to appease God's wrath, and to pay the debt of sinners to his inflexible justice; and we have a strong persuasion that the language of popular religious books, and the common mode of stating the doctrine of Christ's mediation, still communicate very degrading views of God's character. They give to multitudes the impression that the death of Jesus produces a change in the mind of God towards man, and that in this its efficacy chiefly consists. No error seems to us more pernicious. We can endure no shade over the pure goodness of God. We earnestly maintain that Jesus, instead of calling forth in any way or degree the mercy of the Father, was sent by that mercy to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially, and eternally placable,

and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love is the only fountain of what flows to us through his Son. We conceive, that Jesus is dishonoured, not glorified, by ascribing to him an influence which clouds the splendour of Divine benevolence."

We further agree in rejecting, as unscriptural and absurd, the explanation given by the popular system of the manner in which Christ's death procures forgiveness for men. This system used to teach as its fundamental principle, that man, having sinned against an infinite Being, has contracted infinite guilt, and is consequently exposed to an infinite penalty. We believe, however, that this reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, which overlooks the obvious maxim that the guilt of a being must be proportioned to his nature and powers, has fallen into disuse. Still the system teaches that sin, of whatever degree, exposes to endless punishment, and that the whole human race, being infallibly involved by their nature in sin, owe this awful penalty to the justice of their Creator. It teaches that this penalty cannot be remitted, in consistency with the honour of the divine law, unless a substitute be found to endure it or to suffer an equivalent. It also teaches that, from the nature of the case, no substitute is adequate to this work save the infinite God Himself; and accordingly, God, in his second person, took on Him human nature, that He might pay to his own justice the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might thus reconcile forgiveness with the claims and threatenings of his law. Such is the prevalent system. Now, to us, this doctrine seems to carry on its front strong marks of absurdity; and we maintain that Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it, unless it be laid down in the New Testament fully and expressly. We ask our adversaries, then, to point to some plain passages where it

is taught. We ask for one text in which we are told that God took human nature that He might make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice; for one text which tells us that human guilt requires an infinite substitute; that Christ's sufferings owe their efficacy to their being borne by an infinite being; or that his divine nature gives infinite value to the sufferings of the human. Not *one word* of this description can we find in the Scriptures; not a text which even hints at these strange doctrines. They are altogether, we believe, the fictions of theologians. Christianity is in no degree responsible for them. We are astonished at their prevalence. What can be plainer than that God cannot, in any sense, be a sufferer, or bear a penalty in the room of his creatures? How dishonourable to Him is the supposition that his justice is now so severe as to exact infinite punishment for the sins of frail and feeble men, and now so easy and yielding as to accept the limited pains of Christ's human soul as a full equivalent for the endless woes due from the world! How plain is it also, according to this doctrine, that God, instead of being plenteous in forgiveness, never forgives; for it seems absurd to speak of men as forgiven, when their whole punishment, or an equivalent to it, is borne by a substitute. A scheme more fitted to obscure the brightness of Christianity and the mercy of God, or less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not, we think, be easily framed.

We believe, too, that this system is unfavourable to the character. It naturally leads men to think that Christ came to change God's mind rather than their own; that the highest object of his mission was to avert punishment rather than to communicate holiness; and that a large part of religion consists in disparaging good works and human virtue, for the purpose of magnifying the value of Christ's vicarious sufferings. In this way a sense of the infinite importance and

indispensable necessity of personal improvement is weakened, and high-sounding praises of Christ's cross seem often to be substituted for obedience to his precepts. For ourselves, we have not so learned Jesus. Whilst we gratefully acknowledge that he came to rescue us from punishment, we believe that he was sent on a still nobler errand, namely, to deliver us from sin itself, and to form us to a sublime and heavenly virtue. We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, and wandering mind. No influence in the universe seems to us so glorious as that over the character; and no redemption so worthy of thankfulness as the restoration of the soul to purity. Without this, pardon, were it possible, would be of little value. Why pluck the sinner from hell, if a hell be left to burn in his own breast? Why raise him to heaven, if he remain a stranger to its sanctity and love? With these impressions, we are accustomed to value the Gospel chiefly as it abounds in effectual aids, motives, excitements to a generous and divine virtue. In this virtue, as in a common centre, we see all its doctrines, precepts, promises meet; and we believe that faith in this religion is of no worth, and contributes nothing to salvation, any further than as it uses these doctrines, precepts, promises, and the whole life, character, sufferings, and triumphs of Jesus, as the means of purifying the mind, of changing it into the likeness of his celestial excellence.

(5.) Having thus stated our views of the highest object of Christ's mission, that it is the recovery of men to virtue or holiness, I shall now, in the last place, give our views of the nature of Christian virtue, or true holiness. We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience. We believe that

these moral faculties are the grounds of responsibility, and the highest distinctions of human nature, and that no act is praiseworthy any further than it springs from their exertion. We believe that no dispositions infused into us without our own moral activity are of the nature of virtue, and therefore we reject the doctrine of irresistible divine influence on the human mind, moulding it into goodness, as marble is hewn into a statue. Such goodness, if this word may be used, would not be the object of moral approbation, any more than the instinctive affections of inferior animals or the constitutional amiableness of human beings.

By these remarks, we do not mean to deny the importance of God's aid or Spirit: but by his Spirit we mean a moral, illuminating, and persuasive influence, not physical, not compulsory, not involving a necessity of virtue. We object, strongly, to the idea of many Christians respecting man's impotence and God's irresistible agency on the heart, believing that they subvert our responsibility and the laws of our moral nature, that they make men machines, that they cast on God the blame of all evil deeds, that they discourage good minds, and inflate the fanatical with wild conceits of immediate and sensible inspiration.

Among the virtues, we give the first place to the love of God. We believe that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator, that his infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting-place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that without Him our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love would wither and decay. We believe, too, that the love of God is not only essential to happiness, but to the strength and perfection of all the virtues, that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director; that benevolence, unless

nourished by *communion with his goodness and encouraged by his smile, could not thrive amidst the selfishness and thanklessness of the world; and that self-government, without a sense of the divine inspection, would hardly extend beyond an outward and partial purity. God, as He is essentially goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so He is the life, motive, and sustainer of virtue in the human soul.

But whilst, we earnestly inculcate the love of God, we believe that great care is necessary to distinguish it from counterfeits. We think that much which is called piety is worthless. Many have fallen into the error that there can be no excess in feelings which have God for their object; and, distrusting as coldness that self-possession without which virtue and devotion lose all their dignity, they have abandoned themselves to extravagances which have brought contempt on piety. Most certainly, if the love of God be that which often bears its name, the less we have of it the better. If religion be the shipwreck of understanding, we cannot keep too far from it. On this subject we always speak plainly. We cannot sacrifice our reason to the reputation of zeal. We owe it to truth and religion to maintain that fanaticism, partial insanity, sudden impressions, and ungovernable transports are anything rather than piety.

We conceive that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration of his moral perfections. Thus, it perfectly coincides, and is in fact the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, and goodness. You will easily judge, then, what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We lay no stress on strong excitements. We esteem him, and him only, a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government; who shows his delight in God's benevolence by loving and serving

his neighbour; his delight in God's justice by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity by regulating his thoughts, imagination and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of Scripture may come to them as from Heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favour be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, Do they love God's commands, in which his character is fully expressed, and give up to these their habits and passions? Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the natural direction of a tree during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display.

We would not, by these remarks, be understood as wishing to exclude from religion warmth, and even transport. We honour and highly value true religious sensibility. We believe that Christianity is intended to act powerfully on our whole nature, on the heart as well as the understanding and the conscience. We conceive of heaven as a state where the love of God will be exalted into an unbounded fervour and joy; and we desire, in our pilgrimage here, to drink into the spirit of that better world. But we think that religious warmth is only to be valued when it springs naturally from an improved character, when it comes unforced, when it is the recompense of obedience, when it is the warmth of a mind which understands God by being like Him, and when, instead of disordering, it exalts the understanding, invigorates conscience, gives a pleasure to common duties, and is seen to exist in

connection with cheerfulness, judiciousness, and a reasonable frame of mind. When we observe a fervour called religious in men whose general character expresses little refinement and elevation, and whose piety seems at war with reason, we pay it little respect. We honour religion too much to give its sacred name to a feverish, forced, fluctuating zeal, which has little power over the life.

Another important branch of virtue we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Jesus, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on earth a benefactor to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immortality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire when we think that, if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance, and enjoy his friendship for ever.

I need not express to you our views on the subject of the benevolent virtues. We attach such importance to these, that we are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality, and beneficence, as the badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God, as the best proof of piety. On this subject I need not and cannot enlarge; but there is one branch of benevolence which I ought not to pass over in silence, because we think that we conceive of it more highly and justly

than many of our brethren. I refer to the duty of candour, charitable judgment, especially towards those who differ in religious opinion. We think that in nothing have Christians so widely departed from their religion as in this particular. We read with astonishment and horror the history of the church; and sometimes when we look back on the fires of persecution, and on the zeal of Christians in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to every religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguishing opinions, covered with badges of party, shutting his eyes on the virtues and his ears on the arguments of his opponents, arrogating all excellence to his own sect and all saving power to his own creed, sheltering under the name of pious zeal, the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance, and trampling on men's rights under the pretence of saving their souls.

We can hardly conceive of a plainer obligation on beings of our frail and fallible nature, who are instructed in the duty of candid judgment, than to abstain from condemning men of apparent conscientiousness and sincerity, who are chargeable with no crime but that of differing from us in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and differing, too, on topics of great and acknowledged obscurity. We are astonished at the hardness of those who, with Christ's warnings sounding in their ears, take on them the responsibility of making creeds for his church, and cast out professors of virtuous lives for imagined errors, for the guilt of thinking for themselves. We know that zeal for truth is the cover for this usurpation of Christ's prerogative; but we think that zeal for truth, as it is called, is very suspicious, except in men, whose capacities and advantages, whose

patient deliberation, and whose improvements in humility, mildness, and candour, give them a right to hope that their views are more just than those of their neighbours. Much of what passes for a zeal for truth we look upon with little respect, for it often appears to thrive most luxuriantly where other virtues shoot up thinly and feebly; and we have no gratitude for those reformers who would force upon us a doctrine which has not sweetened their own tempers, or made them better men than their neighbours.

We are accustomed to think much of the difficulties attending religious inquiries; difficulties springing from the slow development of our minds, from the power of early impressions, from the state of society, from human authority, from the general neglect of the reasoning powers, from the want of just principles of criticism and of important helps in interpreting Scripture, and from various other causes. We find that on no subject have men, and even good men, ingrafted so many strange conceits, wild theories, and fictions of fancy, as on religion; and remembering, as we do, that we ourselves are sharers of the common frailty, we dare not assume infallibility in the treatment of our fellow-Christians, or encourage in common Christians, who have little time for investigation, the habit of denouncing and contemning other denominations, perhaps more enlightened and virtuous than their own. Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn, these are virtues which, however poorly practised by us, we admire and recommend; and we would rather join ourselves to the church in which they abound, than to any other communion, however elated with the belief of its own orthodoxy, however strict in guarding its creed, however burning with zeal against imagined error.

I have thus given the distinguishing views of those Christians in whose names I have spoken. We have

embraced this system not hastily or lightly, but after much deliberation; and we hold it fast, not merely because we believe it to be true, but because we regard it as purifying truth, as a doctrine according to godliness, as able to 'work mightily' and to 'bring forth fruit' in them who believe. That we wish to spread it, we have no desire to conceal; but we think that we wish its diffusion because we regard it as more friendly to practical piety and pure morals than the opposite doctrines, because it gives clearer and nobler views of duty and stronger motives to its performance, because it recommends religion at once to the understanding and the heart, because it asserts the lovely and venerable attributes of God, because it tends to restore the benevolent spirit of Jesus to his divided and afflicted church, and because it cuts off every hope of God's favour except that which springs from practical conformity to the life and precepts of Christ. We see nothing in our views to give offence save their purity, and it is their purity which makes us seek and hope their extension through the world.

OBJECTIONS TO UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY CONSIDERED.

(1819)

IT is due to truth, and a just deference to our fellow-Christians, to take notice of objections which are currently made to our particular views of religion; nor ought we to dismiss such objections as unworthy of attention on account of their supposed lightness; because what is light to us may weigh much with our neighbour, and truth may suffer from obstructions which a few explanations might remove. It is to be feared that those Christians who are called Unitarian have been wanting in this duty. Whilst they have met the laboured arguments of their opponents fully and fairly, they have overlooked the loose, vague, indefinite objections which float through the community, and operate more on common minds than formal reasoning. On some of these objections remarks will now be offered; and it is hoped that our plainness of speech will not be construed into severity, nor our strictures on different systems be ascribed to a desire of retaliation.¹ It cannot be expected that we shall repel with indifference what seem to us reproaches on some of the most important and consoling views of Christianity. Believing that the truths which through God's good providence we are called to maintain are necessary to the vindication of the Divine character, and to the prevalence of a more

¹ First published in the *Christian Disciple*, 1819.

enlightened and exalted piety, we are bound to assert them honestly, and to speak freely of the opposite errors which now disfigure Christianity. What, then, are the principal objections to Unitarian Christianity?

(1.) It is objected to us, that we deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Now what does this objection mean? What are we to understand by the Divinity of Christ? In the sense in which many Christians, and perhaps a majority, interpret it, we do not deny it, but believe it as firmly as themselves. We believe firmly in the Divinity of Christ's mission and office, that he spoke with Divine authority, and was a bright image of the Divine perfections. We believe that God dwelt in him, manifested Himself through him, taught men by him, and communicated to him his spirit without measure. We believe that Jesus Christ was the most glorious display, expression, and representative of God to mankind, so that in seeing and knowing him, we see and know the invisible Father; so that when Christ came, God visited the world and dwelt with men more conspicuously than at any former period. In Christ's words we hear God speaking; in his miracles we behold God acting; in his character and life we see an unsullied image of God's purity and love. We believe, then, in the Divinity of Christ, as this term is often and properly used. How, then, it may be asked, do we differ from other Christians? We differ in this important respect. Whilst we honour Christ as the Son, representative, and image of the Supreme God, we do not believe him to be the Supreme God Himself. We maintain that Christ and God are *distinct beings*, two beings, not one and the same being. On this point a little repetition may be pardoned, for many good Christians, after the controversies of ages, misunderstand the precise difference between us and themselves. Trinitarianism teaches that Jesus Christ is the Supreme and Infinite God, and that he and his Father are not only

one in affection, counsel, and will, but are strictly and literally one and the same being. Now, to us, this doctrine is most unscriptural and irrational. We say that the Son cannot be the same being with his own Father; that he, who was sent into the world to save it, cannot be the living God who sent him. The language of Jesus is explicit and unqualified. 'I came not to do mine own will.'—'I came not from myself.'—'I came from God.' Now, we affirm, and this is our chief heresy, that Jesus was not and could not be the God from whom he came, but was another being; and it amazes us that any can resist this simple truth. The doctrine that Jesus, who was born at Bethlehem; who ate and drank and slept; who suffered and was crucified; who came from God; who prayed to God; who did God's will; and who said, on leaving the world, 'I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God;' the doctrine that this Jesus was the Supreme God Himself, and the same being with his Father, this seems to us a contradiction to reason and Scripture so flagrant, that the simple statement of it is a sufficient refutation. We are often charged with degrading Christ; but if this reproach belong to any Christians, it falls, we fear, on those who accuse him of teaching a doctrine so contradictory, and so subversive of the supremacy of our Heavenly Father. Certainly our humble and devout Master has given no ground for this accusation. He always expressed towards God the reverence of a son. He habitually distinguished himself from God. He referred to God all his powers. He said, without limitation or reserve, 'The Father is greater than I.'—'Of myself I can do nothing.' If to represent Christ as a being distinct from God, and as inferior to Him, be to degrade him, then let our opponents lay the guilt where it belongs, not on us, but on our Master, whose language we borrow, in whose very words we express our sentiments, whose words we

·dare not trifle with and force from their plain sense. Our limits will not allow us to say more; but we ask common Christians, who have taken their opinions from the Bible rather than from human systems, to look honestly into their own minds, and to answer frankly, whether they have not understood and believed Christ's divinity in the sense maintained by us, rather than in that for which the Trinitarians contend.

(2.) We proceed to another objection, and one which probably weighs more with multitudes than any other. It is this, that our doctrine respecting Christ takes from the sinner the only ground of hope. It is said by our opponents, 'We and all men are sinners by our very nature, and infinitely guilty before God. The sword of divine justice hangs over us, and hell opens beneath us; and where shall we find a refuge but in an infinite Saviour? We want an Infinite Atonement; and in depriving us of this you rob us of our hope, you tear from the Scriptures the only doctrine which meets our wants. We may burn our Bibles if your interpretation be true, for our case is desperate: we are lost for ever.' In such warm and wild language, altogether unwarranted by Scripture, yet exceedingly fitted to work on common and terror-stricken minds, our doctrine is constantly assailed.

Now to this declamation, for such we esteem it, we oppose one plain request. Show us, we say, a single passage in the Bible in which we are told that the sin of man is infinite, and needs an infinite atonement. We find not one. Not even a whisper of this doctrine comes to us from the sacred writers. Let us stop a moment and weigh this doctrine. It teaches us that man, although created by God a frail, erring, and imperfect being, and even created with an irresistible propensity to sin, is yet regarded by the Creator as an infinite offender, meriting infinite punishment for his earliest transgressions; and that he is doomed to

endless-torment, unless an infinite Saviour appear for his rescue ! How can anyone, we ask, charge on our benevolent and righteous Parent such a government of his creatures ? We maintain that man is not created in a condition which makes an infinite atonement necessary ; nor do we believe that any creature can fall into a condition from which God may not deliver him without this rigid expedient. Surely, if an infinite satisfaction to justice were indispensable to our salvation, if God took on Him human nature for the very purpose of offering it, and if this fact constitute the peculiar glory, the life and essence, and the saving efficacy of the Gospel, we must find it expressed clearly, definitely, in at least one passage in the Bible. But not one, we repeat it, can be found there. We maintain, further, that this doctrine of God becoming a victim and sacrifice for his own, rebellious subjects, is as irrational as it is unscriptural. We have always supposed that atonement, if necessary, was to be made *to*, not *by*, the sovereign who has been offended ; and we cannot conceive a more unlikely method of vindicating his authority, than that he himself should bear the punishment which is due to transgressors of his laws. We have another objection. If an infinite atonement be necessary, and if, consequently, none but God can make it, we see not but that God must become a sufferer, must take upon Himself our pain and woe ; a thought from which a pious mind shrinks with horror. To escape this difficulty, we are told that Christ suffered as man, not as God ; but if man only suffered, if only a human and finite mind suffered, if Christ, as God, was perfectly happy on the cross, and bore only a short and limited pain in his human nature, where, we ask, was the infinite atonement ? Where is the boasted hope which this doctrine is said to give to the sinner ?

The objection that there is no hope for the sinner

unless Christ be the infinite God, amazes us. Surely, if we have a Father in heaven of infinite goodness and power, we need no other infinite person to save us. The common doctrine disparages and dishonours the only true God, our Father, as if, without the help of a second and a third divinity, equal to Himself, He could not restore his frail creature, man. We have not the courage of our brethren. With the Scriptures in our hands, with the solemn attestations which they contain to the divine Unity and to Christ's dependence, we dare not give to the God and Father of Jesus an equal or rival in the glory of originating our redemption, or of accomplishing it by underived and infinite power. Are we asked, as we sometimes are, what is our hope if Christ be not the supreme God? We answer, it is the boundless and almighty goodness of his Father and our Father; a goodness which cannot require an infinite atonement for the sins of a frail and limited creature. God's essential and unchangeable mercy, not Christ's infinity, is the Scriptural foundation of a sinner's hope. In the Scriptures, our Heavenly Father is always represented as the sole original, spring, and first cause of our salvation; and let no one presume to divide His glory with another. That Jesus came to save us we owe entirely to the Father's benevolent appointment. That Jesus is perfectly adequate to the work of our salvation is to be believed, not because he is himself the supreme God, but because the supreme and unerring God selected, commissioned, and empowered him for this office. That his death is an important means of our salvation, we gratefully acknowledge; but ascribe its efficacy to the merciful disposition of God towards the human race. To build the hope of pardon on the independent and infinite sufficiency of Jesus Christ, is to build on an unscriptural and false foundation; for Jesus teaches us that of himself he can do nothing; that all power is given to him by

his Father; and that he is a proper object of trust, because he came not of himself, or 'to do his own will, but because the Father sent him.' We indeed, lean on Christ, but it is because he is 'a corner-stone, chosen by God and laid by God in Zion.' God's forgiving love, declared to mankind by Jesus Christ, and exercised through him, is the foundation of hope to the penitent on which we primarily rest, and a firmer the universe cannot furnish us.

(3.) We now proceed to another objection. We are charged with expecting to be saved by Works, and not by Grace. This charge may be easily despatched, and a more groundless one cannot easily be imagined. We indeed attach great importance to Christian works, or Christian obedience, believing that a practice or life conformed to the precepts and example of Jesus is the great end for which faith in him is required, and is the great condition on which everlasting life is bestowed. We are accustomed to speak highly of the virtues and improvements of a true Christian, rejecting with abhorrence the idea that they are no better than the outward Jewish righteousness, which the Prophet called 'filthy rags'; and maintaining with the Apostle that they are, 'in the sight of God, of great price.' We believe that holiness, or virtue is the very image of God in the human soul, a ray of his brightness, the best gift which He communicates to his creatures, the highest benefit which Christ came to confer, the only important and lasting distinction between man and man. Still, we always and earnestly maintain that no human virtue, no human obedience, can give a legal claim, a right by merit, to the life and immortality brought to light by Christ. We see and mourn over the deficiencies, broken resolutions, and mixed motives of the best men. We always affirm that God's grace, benignity, free kindness, is needed by the most advanced Christians, and that to this alone we owe the promise in the Gospel, of full

remission and everlasting happiness to the penitent. None speak of mercy more constantly than we. One of our distinctions is, that we magnify this lovely attribute of the Deity. So accustomed are we to insist on the infinity of God's grace and mercy, that our adversaries often charge us with forgetting his justice; and yet it is objected to us that, renouncing grace, we appeal to justice, and build our hope on the abundance of our merit!

(4.) We now proceed to another objection often urged against our views, or rather against those who preach them; and it is this, that we preach morality. To meet this objection, we beg to know what is intended by morality. Are we to understand by it, what it properly signifies, our whole duty, however made known to us, whether by nature or revelation? Does it mean the whole extent of those obligations which belong to us as moral beings? Does it mean that 'sober, righteous, godly life,' which our moral Governor has prescribed to us by his Son, as the great preparation for heaven? If this be morality, we cheerfully plead guilty to the charge of preaching it, and of labouring chiefly and constantly to enforce it; and believing, as we do, that all the doctrines, precepts, threatenings, and promises of the Gospel are revealed for no other end than to make men moral, in this true and generous sense, we hope to continue to merit this reproach.

We fear, however, that this is not the meaning of the morality which is said to be the burden of our preaching. Some, at least, who thus reproach us, mean that we are accustomed to enjoin only a worldly and social morality, consisting in common honesty, common kindness, and freedom from gross vices; neglecting to inculcate inward purity, devotion, heavenly-mindedness, and love to Jesus Christ. We hope that the persons who thus accuse us speak from rumour, and have never heard our instructions for themselves; for the charge is false; and no one who ever sat under our ministry can

urge it without branding himself a slanderer. The first and great commandment, which is to love God supremely, is recognized and enforced habitually in our preaching; and our obligations to Jesus Christ, the friend who died for us, are urged, we hope, not wholly without tenderness and effect.

It is but justice, however, to observe of many, that when they reproach us with moral preaching, they do not mean that we teach only outward decencies, but that we do not inculcate certain 'favourite doctrines, which are to them the very marrow and richness of the Gospel. When such persons hear a sermon, be the subject what it may, which is not seasoned with recognitions of the Trinity, total depravity, and similar articles of faith, they call it moral. According to this strange and unwarrantable use of the term, we rejoice to say that we are 'moral preachers'; and it comforts us that we have for our pattern 'him who spake as man never spake,' and who, in his longest discourse, has dropped not a word about a Trinity, or inborn corruption, or special and electing grace; and, still more, we seriously doubt whether our preaching could with propriety be called moral. Did we urge these doctrines, especially the two last; for, however warmly they may be defended by honest men, they seem to us to border on immorality; that is, to dishonour God, to weaken the sense of responsibility, to break the spirit, and to loosen the restraints on guilty passion.

(5.) Another objection urged against us is, that our system does not produce as much zeal, seriousness, and piety as other views of religion. The objection it is difficult to repel, except by language which will seem to be a boasting of ourselves. When expressed in plain language, it amounts to this:—'We Trinitarians and Calvinists are better and more pious than you Unitarians, and consequently our system is more Scriptural than yours.' Now, assertions of this kind do not strike

us as very modest and humble, and we believe that truth does not require us to defend it by setting up our piety above that of our neighbours.—This, however, we would say, that if our zeal and devotion are faint, the fault is our own, not that of our doctrine. We are sure that our views of the Supreme Being are incomparably more affecting and attractive than those which we oppose. It is the great excellence of our system, that it exalts God, vindicates His parental attributes, and appeals powerfully to the ingenuous principles of love, gratitude, and veneration; and when we compare it with the doctrines which are spread around us, we feel that of all men we are most inexcusable, if a filial piety do not spring up and grow strong in our hearts.

Perhaps it may not be difficult to suggest some causes for the charge that our views do not favour seriousness and zeal. One reason probably is, that we interpret with much rigour those precepts of Christ which forbid ostentation, and enjoin modesty and retirement in devotion. We dread a showy religion. We are disgusted with pretensions to superior sanctity—that stale and vulgar way of building up a sect. We believe that true religion speaks in actions more than in words, and manifests itself chiefly in the common temper and life; in giving up the passions to God's authority, in inflexible uprightness and truth, in active and modest charity, in candid judgment, and in patience under trials and injuries. We think it no part of piety to publish its fervours, but prefer a delicacy in regard to these secrets of the soul; and hence, to those persons who think religion is to be worn conspicuously and spoken of passionately, we may seem cold and dead, when perhaps, were the heart uncovered, it might be seen to be 'alive to God' as truly as their own.

Again, it is one of our principles, flowing necessarily from our views of God, that religion is cheerful; that where its natural tendency is not obstructed by false

theology, or a melancholy temperament, it opens the heart to every pure and innocent pleasure. We do not think that piety disfigures its face, or wraps itself in a funeral pall as its appropriate garb. Now, too many conceive of religion as something gloomy, and never to be named but with an altered tone and countenance; and where they miss these imagined signs of piety, they can hardly believe that a sense of God dwells in the heart.

Another cause of the error in question we believe to be this. Our religious system excludes, or at least does not favour, those overwhelming terrors and transports which many think essential to piety. We do not believe in shaking and disordering men's understandings, by excessive fear, as a preparation for supernatural grace and immediate conversion. This we regard as a dreadful corruption and degradation of religion. Religion, we believe, is a gradual and rational work, beginning sometimes in sudden impressions, but confirmed by reflection, growing by the regular use of Christian means, and advancing silently to perfection. Now, because we specify no time when we were overpowered and created anew by irresistible impulse, because we relate no agonies of despair succeeded by miraculous light and joy, we are thought by some to be strangers to piety;—how reasonably, let the judicious determine.

Once more; we are thought to want zeal, because our principles forbid us to use many methods for spreading them which are common with other Christians. Whilst we value highly our peculiar views, and look to them for the best fruits of piety, we still consider ourselves as bound to think charitably of those who doubt or deny them; and with this conviction, we cannot enforce them with that vehemence, positiveness, and style of menace, which constitute much of the zeal of certain denominations;—and we freely confess that we

would on no account exchange our charity for their zeal; and we trust that the time is near when he who holds what he deems truth with lenity and forbearance, will be accounted more pious than he who compasseth sea and land to make proselytes to his sect, and 'shuts the gates of mercy' on all who will not bow their understandings to his creed.—We fear that in these remarks we may have been unconsciously betrayed into a self-exalting spirit. Nothing could have drawn them from us but the fact that a very common method of opposing our sentiments is to decry the piety of those who adopt them. After all, we mean not to deny our great deficiencies. We have nothing to boast before God, although the cause of truth forbids us to submit to the censoriousness of our brethren.

(6.) Another objection to our views is, that they lead to a rejection of revelation. Unitarianism has been called 'a half-way house to infidelity'—Now, to this objection we need not oppose general reasonings. We will state a plain fact. It is this. A large proportion of the most able and illustrious defenders of the truth of Christianity have been Unitarians; and our religion has received from them, to say the least, as important service in its conflicts with infidelity as from any class of Christians whatever. From the long catalogue of advocates of Christianity among Unitarians, we can select now but a few; but these few are a host. The name of John Locke is familiar to every scholar. He rendered distinguished service to the philosophy of the human mind; nor is this his highest praise. His writings on government and toleration contributed more than those of any other individual to the diffusion of free and generous sentiments through Europe and America; and perhaps Bishop Watson was not guilty of great exaggeration when he said, 'This great man has done more for the establishment of pure Christianity than any author I am acquainted with.' He was a

laborious and successful student of the Scriptures. His works on the 'Epistles of Paul,' and on the 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' formed an era in sacred literature; and he has the honour of having shed a new and bright light on the darkest parts of the New Testament, and in general on the Christian system. Now Locke, be it remembered, was a Unitarian.—We pass to another intellectual prodigy,—to Newton, a name which every man of learning pronounces with reverence; for it reminds him of faculties so exalted above those of ordinary men, that they seem designed to help our conceptions of superior orders of being. This great man, who gained by intuition what others reap from laborious research, after exploring the laws of the universe, turned for light and hope to the Bible; and although his theological works cannot be compared with Locke's, yet in his illustrations of the prophecies, and of Scripture chronology, and in his criticisms on two doubtful passages,¹ which are among the chief supports of the doctrine of the Trinity, he is considered as having rendered valuable services to the Christian cause. Newton, too, was a Unitarian. We are not accustomed to boast of men, or to prop our faith by great names, for Christ, and he only, is our Master; but it is with pleasure that we find in our ranks the most gifted, sagacious, and exalted minds; and we cannot but smile when we sometimes hear from men and women of very limited culture, and with no advantages for enlarged inquiry, reproachful and contemptuous remarks on a doctrine which the vast intelligence of Locke and Newton, after much study of the Scriptures, and in opposition to a prejudiced and intolerant age, received as the truth of God. It is proper to state that doubts have lately been raised as to the religious opinions of Locke and Newton, and for a very obvious reason. In these times of growing light, their names have been

¹ *1 John*, v. 7; *1 Tim.* iii. 16.

found too useful to the Unitarian cause. But the long and general belief of the Unitarianism of these illustrious men can hardly be accounted for, but by admitting the fact; and we know of no serious attempts to set aside the proofs on which this belief is founded.

We pass to another writer, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of England, and of the age in which he lived, Dr. Samuel Clarke. In classical literature, and in metaphysical speculation, Dr. Clarke has a reputation which needs no tribute at our hands. His sermons are an invaluable repository of Scriptural criticism; and his work on the evidences of natural and revealed religion has ever been considered as one of the ablest vindications of our common faith. This great man was a Unitarian. He believed firmly that Jesus was a distinct being from his Father, and a derived and dependent being; and he desired to bring the liturgy of his church into a correspondence with these doctrines.

To those who are acquainted with the memorable infidel controversy in the early part of the last century, excited by the writings of Bolingbroke, Tindal, Morgan, Collins, and Chubb, it will be unnecessary to speak of the zeal and power with which the Christian cause was maintained by learned Unitarians. But we must pass over these, to recall a man whose memory is precious to enlightened believers; we mean Lardner, that most patient and successful advocate of Christianity; who has written, we believe, more largely than any other author on the evidences of the Gospel; from whose works later authors have drawn as from a treasure-house; and whose purity and mildness have disarmed the severity and conciliated the respect of men of very different views from his own. Lardner was a Unitarian.—Next to Lardner, the most laborious advocate of Christianity against the attacks of infidels, in our own day, was Priestley; and whatever we may

think of some of his opinions, we believe that none of his opposers ever questioned the importance of his vindications of our common faith. We certainly do not say too much, when we affirm that Unitarians have not been surpassed by any denomination in zealous, substantial service to the Christian cause. Yet we are told that Unitarianism leads to infidelity ! We are reproached with defection from that religion, round which we have gathered in the day of its danger, and from which, we trust, persecution and death cannot divorce us.

It is indeed said that instances have occurred of persons who, having given up the Trinitarian doctrine, have not stopped there, but have resigned one part of Christianity after another, until they have become thorough infidels. To this we answer, that such instances we have never known ; but that such should occur is not improbable, and is what we should even expect ; for it is natural that when the mind has detected one error in its creed, it should distrust every other article, and should exchange its blind and hereditary assent for a sweeping scepticism. We have examples of this truth at the present moment, both in France and Spain, where multitudes have proceeded from rejecting Popery to absolute Atheism. Now, who of us will argue that the Catholic faith is true, because multitudes who relinquished it have also cast away every religious principle and restraint ; and if the argument be not sound on the side of Popery, how can it pressed into the service of Trinitarianism ? The fact is, that false and absurd doctrines, when exposed, have a natural tendency to beget scepticism in those who received them without reflection. None are so likely to believe too little as those who have begun with believing too much ; and hence we charge upon Trinitarianism whatever tendency may exist in those who forsake it, to sink gradually into infidelity.

Unitarianism does not lead to infidelity. On the contrary, its excellence is that it fortifies faith. Unitarianism is Christianity stripped of those corrupt additions which shock reason and our moral feelings. It is a rational and amiable system, against which no man's understanding, or conscience, or charity, or piety revolts. Can the same be said of that system which teaches the doctrines of three equal persons in one God, of natural and total depravity, of infinite atonement, of special and electing grace, and of the everlasting misery of the non-elected part of mankind? We believe that unless Christianity be purified from these corruptions, it will not be able to bear the unsparing scrutiny to which the progress of society is exposing it. We believe that it must be reformed, or intelligent men will abandon it. As the friends of Christianity, and the foes of infidelity, we are therefore solicitous to diffuse what seem to us nobler and juster views of this divine system.

(7.) It was our purpose to consider one more objection to our views; namely, that they give no consolation in sickness and death. But we have only time to express amazement at such a charge. What! a system which insists with a peculiar energy on the pardoning mercy of God, on his universal and parental love, and on the doctrine of a resurrection and immortality, — such a system unable to give comfort? It unlocks infinite springs of consolation and joy, and gives to him who practically receives it a living, overflowing, and unspeakable hope. Its power to sustain the soul in death has been often tried; and did we believe dying men to be inspired, or that peace and hope in the last hours were God's seal to the truth of doctrines, we should be able to settle at once the controversy about Unitarianism. A striking example of the power of this system in disarming death was lately given by a young minister in a neighbouring

town,¹ known to many of our readers, and singularly endeared to his friends by eminent Christian virtue. He was smitten by sickness in the midst of a useful and happy life, and sank slowly to the grave. His religion—and it was that which has now been defended—gave habitual peace to his mind, and spread a sweet smile over his pale countenance. He retained his faculties to his last hour; and when death came, having left pious counsel to the younger members of his family, and expressions of gratitude to his parents, he breathed out life in the language of Jesus, —‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’ Such was the end of one who held, with an unwavering faith, the great principles which we have here advanced; and yet our doctrine has no consolation, we are told, for sickness and death!

We have thus endeavoured to meet objections commonly urged against our views of religion; and we have done this, not to build up a party, but to promote views of Christianity which seem to us particularly suited to strengthen men’s faith in it, and to make it fruitful of good works and holy lives. Christian virtue, Christian holiness, love to God and man, these are all which we think worth contending for; and these we believe to be intimately connected with the system now maintained. If in this we err, may God discover our error, and disappoint our efforts. We ask no success but what He may approve,—no proselytes but such as will be made better, purer, happier, by the adoption of our views.

¹ Rev. John E. Abbot, of Salem.

UNITARIAN
CHRISTIANITY MOST FAVOURABLE TO PIETY.
(1826)

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.—MARK xii. 29, 30.

WE have assembled to dedicate this building¹ to the worship of the only living and true God, and to the teaching of the religion of his son, Jesus Christ. By this act we do not expect to confer on this spot of ground and these walls any peculiar sanctity or any mysterious properties. We do not suppose that, in consequence of rites now performed, the worship offered here will be more acceptable than prayer uttered in the closet, or breathed from the soul in the midst of business; or that the instructions delivered from this pulpit will be more effectual than if they were uttered in a private dwelling or the open air. By dedication we understand only a solemn expression of the purpose for which this building is reared, joined with prayer to Him who alone can crown our enterprise with success, that our design may be accepted and fulfilled. For this

¹ Preached at the Dedication of the Second Congregational Unitarian Church, New York, 7th December, 1826.

religious act we find, indeed, no precept in the New Testament, and on this account some have scrupled as to its propriety. But we are not among those who consider the written Word as a statute-book, by the letter of which every step in life must be governed. We believe, on the other hand, that one of the great excellences of Christianity is that it does not deal in minute regulation, but that, having given broad views of duty, and enjoined a pure and disinterested spirit, it leaves us to apply these rules and express this spirit according to the promptings of the divine monitor within us, and according to the claims and exigencies of the ever-varying conditions in which we are placed. We believe, too, that revelation is not intended to supersede God's other modes of instruction; that it is not intended to drown, but to make more audible, the voice of nature. Now, nature dictates the propriety of such an act as we are this day assembled to perform. Nature has always taught men, on the completion of an important structure, designed for public and lasting good, to solemnize its first appropriation to the purpose for which it was reared by some special service. To us, there is a sacredness in this moral instinct, in this law written on the heart; and in listening reverently to God's dictates, however conveyed, we doubt not that we shall enjoy his acceptance and blessing.

I have said we dedicate this building to the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. But in the present state of the Christian Church, these words are not as definite as they one day will be. This Gospel is variously interpreted. It is preached in various forms. Christendom is parcelled out into various sects. When, therefore, we see a new house of worship reared, the question immediately arises, 'To what mode of teaching Christianity is it to be devoted?' I need not tell you, my hearers, that this house has been built by that class of Christians who are called Unitarians, and that the

Gospel will here be taught as interpreted by that body of believers. • This you all know ; but perhaps all present have not attached a very precise meaning to the word by which our particular views of Christianity are designated. Unitarianism has been made a term of so much reproach, and has been uttered in so many tones of alarm, horror, indignation, and scorn, that to many it gives only a vague impresson of something monstrous, impious, unutterably perilous. To such I would say, that this doctrine, which is considered by some as the last and most perfect invention of Satan, the consummation of his blasphemies, the most cunning weapon ever forged in the fires of hell, amounts to this,—That there is one God, even the Father ; and that Jesus Christ is not this One God, but his son and messenger, who derived all his powers and glories from the Universal Parent, and who came into the world not to claim supreme homage for himself, but to carry up the soul to his Father as the Only Divine Person, the Only Ultimate Object of religious worship. To us, this doctrine seems not to have sprung from hell, but to have descended from the throne of God, and to invite and attract us thither. To us, it seems to come from the Scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, and as articulate and clear as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in our ears. To this doctrine, and to Christianity interpreted in consistency with it, we dedicate this building.

That we desire to propagate this doctrine, we do not conceal. It is a treasure which we wish not to confine to ourselves, which we dare not lock up in our own breasts. We regard it as given to us for others, as well as for ourselves. We should rejoice to spread it through this great city, to carry it into every dwelling, and to send it far and wide to the remotest settlements of our country. • Am I asked why we wish this diffusion ? We dare not say that we are in no degree influenced by

sectarian feeling ; for we see it raging around us, and we should be more than men were we wholly to escape an epidemic passion. We do hope, however, that our main purpose and aim is not sectarian, but to promote a purer and nobler piety than now prevails. We are not induced to spread our opinions by the mere conviction that they are true ; for there are many truths, historical, metaphysical, scientific, literary, which we have no anxiety to propagate. We regard them as the highest, most important, most efficient truths, and therefore demanding a firm testimony and earnest efforts to make them known. In thus speaking we do not mean that we regard our peculiar views as essential to salvation. Far from us be this spirit of exclusion, the very spirit of antichrist, the worst of all the delusions of Popery and of Protestantism. We hold nothing to be essential but the simple and supreme dedication of the mind, heart, and life to God and to his will. This inward and practical devotedness to the Supreme Being, we are assured, is attained and accepted under all the forms of Christianity. We believe, however, that it is favoured by that truth which we maintain, as by no other system of faith. We regard Unitarianism as peculiarly the friend of inward, living, practical religion. For this we value it—for this we would spread it : and we desire none to embrace it but such as shall seek and derive from it this celestial influence.

This character and property of Unitarian Christianity, its fitness to promote true, deep, and living piety, being our chief ground of attachment to it, and our chief motive for dedicating this house to its inculcation, I have thought proper to make this the topic of my present discourse. I do not propose to prove the truth of Unitarianism by Scriptural authorities, for this argument would exceed the limits of a sermon, but to show its superior tendency to form an elevated religious character. If, however, this position can be sustained,

I shall have contributed no weak argument in support of the truth of our views ; for the chief purpose of Christianity undoubtedly is to promote piety, to bring us to God, to fill our souls with that Great Being, to make us alive to Him ; and a religious system can carry no more authentic mark of a divine, original, than its obvious, direct, and peculiar adaptation to quicken and raise the mind to its Creator. In speaking thus of Unitarian Christianity as promoting piety, I ought to observe that I use this word in its proper and highest sense. I mean not everything which bears the name of piety, for under this title superstition, fanaticism, and formality are walking abroad and claiming respect. I mean not an anxious frame of mind, not abject and slavish fear, not a dread of hell, not a repetition of forms, not church-going, not loud profession, not severe censure of others' irreligion ; but filial love and reverence towards God, habitual gratitude, cheerful trust, ready obedience, and, though last, not least, an imitation of the ever-active and unbounded benevolence of the Creator.

The object of this discourse requires me to speak with great freedom of different systems of religion. But let me be not misunderstood. Let not the uncharitableness which I condemn be lightly laid to my charge. Let it be remembered that I speak only of systems, not of those who embrace them. In setting forth with all simplicity what seem to me the good or bad tendencies of doctrines, I have not a thought of giving standards or measures by which to estimate the virtue or vice of their professors. Nothing would be more unjust than to decide on men's characters from their peculiarities of faith ; and the reason is plain. Such peculiarities are not the only causes which impress and determine the mind. Our nature is exposed to innumerable other influences. If, indeed, a man were to know nothing but his creed, were to meet with no

human beings but those who adopt it, were to see no example and to hear no conversation but such as were formed by it; if his creed were to meet him everywhere, and to exclude every other object of thought—then his character might be expected to answer to it with great precision. But our Creator has not shut us up in so narrow a school. The mind is exposed to an infinite variety of influences, and these are multiplying with the progress of society. Education, friendship, neighbourhood, public opinion, the state of society, ‘the genius of the place’ where we live, books, events, the pleasure and business of life, the outward creation, our physical temperament, and innumerable other causes, are perpetually pouring in upon the soul thoughts, views, and emotions; and these influences are so complicated, so peculiarly combined in the case of every individual, and so modified by the original susceptibilities and constitution of every mind, that on no subject is there greater uncertainty than on the formation of character. To determine the precise operation of a religious opinion amidst this host of influences, surpasses human power. A great truth may be completely neutralized by the countless impressions and excitements which the mind receives from other sources; and so a great error may be disarmed of much of its power by the superior energy of other and better views, of early habits, and of virtuous examples. Nothing is more common than to see a doctrine believed without swaying the will. Its efficacy depends, not on the assent of the intellect, but on the place which it occupies in the thoughts, on the distinctness and vividness with which it is conceived, on its association with our common ideas, on its frequency of recurrence, and on its command of the attention, without which it has no life. Accordingly, pernicious opinions are not seldom held by men of the most illustrious virtue. I mean not, then, in commending or

condemning systems, to pass sentence on their professors. I know the power of the mind to select from a multifarious system, for its habitual use, those features or principles which are generous, pure, and ennobling, and by these to sustain its spiritual life amidst the nominal profession of many errors. I know that a creed is one thing as written in a book, and another as it exists in the minds of its advocates. In the book, all the doctrines appear in equally strong and legible lines. In the mind, many are faintly traced and seldom recurred to, whilst others are inscribed as with sunbeams, and are the chosen, constant lights of the soul. Hence, in good men of opposing denominations, a real agreement may subsist as to their vital principles of faith; and amidst the division of tongues there may be unity of soul, and the same internal worship of God. By these remarks, I do not mean that error is not evil, or that it bears no pernicious fruit. Its tendencies are always bad. But I mean that these tendencies exert themselves, amidst so many counteracting influences, and that injurious opinions so often lie dead through the want of mixture with the common thoughts, through the mind's not absorbing them, and changing them into its own substance, that the highest respect may and ought to be cherished for men in whose creed we find much to disapprove. In this discourse I shall speak freely, and some may say severely, of Trinitarianism; but I love and honour not a few of its advocates; and in opposing what I deem their error, I would on no account detract from their worth. After these remarks, I hope that the language of earnest discussion and strong conviction will not be construed into the want of that charity which I acknowledge as the first grace of our religion.

I now proceed to illustrate and prove the superiority of Unitarian Christianity, as a means of promoting a deep and noble piety.

(1.) Unitarianism is a system most favourable to piety, because it presents to the mind one, and only one, Infinite Person to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on one Father of unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory. To Him it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around Him it gathers all the splendours of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold, the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of Providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, and powers, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind, which these views have penetrated, through this intimate association of everything exciting and exalting in the universe with one Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to Him with the intensest and profoundest love of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God, and means to hold fast this truth. But three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the sender, one is given and another the giver, of whom one intercedes and another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh and another never becomes incarnate,—three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects of the mind as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and, from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as one Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more

easily and intimately all the impressions and emotions of piety flow together, and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength for ever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory, and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

• My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God, upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is one, and only one, Almighty Agent in the universe, one Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever-growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trial, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold. But let three persons claim from me supreme homage, and claim it on different grounds, one for sending and another for coming to my relief, and I am divided, distracted, perplexed. My frail intellect is overborne. Instead of one Father, on whose arm I can rest, my mind is torn from object to object, and I tremble lest, among so many claimants of supreme love, I should withhold from one or another his due.

(2) Unitarianism is the system most favourable to piety, because it holds forth and preserves inviolate the spirituality of God. 'God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' It is of great importance to the progress and elevation of the religious principle that we should refine more and more our conceptions of God; that we should separate from Him all material properties, and whatever is limited or imperfect in our own nature; that

we should regard Him as a pure intelligence, an unmixed and infinite Mind. When it pleased God to select the Jewish people and place them under miraculous interpositions, one of the first precepts given them was, that they should not represent God under any bodily form, any graven image, or the likeness of any creature. Next came Christianity, which had this as one of its great objects, to render religion still more spiritual, by abolishing the ceremonial and outward worship of former times, and by discarding those grosser modes of describing God through which the ancient prophets had sought to impress an unrefined people.

Now, Unitarianism concurs with this sublime moral purpose of God. It asserts his spirituality. It approaches Him under no bodily form, but as a pure spirit, as the infinite and the universal Mind. On the other hand, it is the direct influence of Trinitarianism to materialize men's conceptions of God ; and, in truth, this system is a relapse into the error of the rudest and earliest ages, into the worship of a corporeal God. Its leading feature is the doctrine of a God clothed with a body, and acting and speaking through a material frame,—of the Infinite Divinity dying on a cross ; a doctrine which in earthliness reminds us of the mythology of the rudest pagans, and which a pious Jew, in the twilight of the Mosaic religion, would have shrunk from with horror. It seems to me no small objection to the Trinity, that it supposes God to take a body in the later and more improved ages of the world, when it is plain that such a manifestation, if needed at all, was peculiarly required in the infancy of the race. The effect of such a system in debasing the idea of God, in associating with the divinity human passions and infirmities, is too obvious to need much elucidation. On the supposition that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, God may be said to be

a material being, on the same general ground on which this is affirmed of man; for man is material only by the union of the mind with the body; and the very meaning of incarnation is that God took a body, through which he acted and spoke, as the human soul operates through its corporeal organs. Every bodily affection may thus be ascribed to God. Accordingly the Trinitarian, in his most solemn act of adoration, is heard to pray in these appalling words: 'Good Lord, deliver us; by the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us.' Now I ask you to judge, from the principles of human nature, whether to worshippers, who adore their God for his wounds and tears, his agony, and blood, and sweat, the ideas of corporeal existence and human suffering will not predominate over the conceptions of a purely spiritual essence: whether the mind in clinging to the man, will not lose the God; whether a surer method for depressing and adulterating the pure thought of the Divinity could have been devised. That the Trinitarian is unconscious of this influence of his faith, I know, nor do I charge it on him as a crime. Still it exists, and cannot be too much deplored.

The Roman Catholics, true to human nature and their creed, have sought by painting and statuary to bring their imagined God before their eyes; and have thus obtained almost as vivid impressions of Him as if they had lived with Him on the earth. The Protestant condemns them for using these similitudes and representations in their worship; but, if a Trinitarian, he does so to his own condemnation. For if, as he believes, it was once a duty to bow in adoration before the living body of his incarnate God, what possible guilt can there be in worshipping before the pictured or sculptured memorial of the same being? Christ's body may as

truly be represented by the artist as any other human form; and its image may be used as effectually, and properly as that of an ancient sage or hero, to recall him with vividness to the mind. Is it said that God has expressly forbidden the use of images in our worship? But why was that prohibition laid on the Jews? For this express reason, that God had not presented Himself to them in any form which admitted of representation. Hear the language of Moses: 'Take good heed lest ye make you a graven image, for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire.'¹ If, since that period, God has taken a body, then the reason of the prohibition has ceased; and if He took a body, among other purposes, that he might assist the weakness of the intellect, which needs a material form, then a statue, which lends so great an aid to the conception of an absent friend, is not only justified, but seems to be required.

This materializing and embodying of the Supreme Being, which is the essence of Trinitarianism, cannot but be adverse to a growing and exalted piety. Human and divine properties, being confounded in one being, lose their distinctness. The splendours of the Godhead are dimmed. The worshippers of an incarnate Deity, through the frailty of their nature, are strongly tempted to fasten chiefly on his human attributes; and their devotion, instead of rising to the Infinite God, and taking the peculiar character which infinity inspires, becomes rather a human affection, borrowing much of its fervour from the ideas of suffering, blood, and death. It is indeed possible that this God-man (to 'use the strange phraseology of Trinitarians) may excite the mind more easily than a purely spiritual divinity; just as a tragedy, addressed to the eye and ear, will interest

¹ *Deut.* iv. 15, 16. The arrangement of the text is a little changed, to put the reader in immediate possession of the meaning.

the multitude more than the contemplation of the most exalted character. But the emotions which are the most easily roused are not the profoundest or most enduring. This human love, inspired by a human God, though at first more fervid, cannot grow and spread through the soul, like the reverential attachment which an infinite, spiritual Father awakens. Refined conceptions of God, though more slowly attained, have a more quickening and all-pervading energy, and admit of perpetual accessions of brightness, life, and strength.

True, we shall be told that Trinitarianism has converted only one of its three persons into a human Deity, and that the other two remain purely spiritual beings. But who does not know that man will attach himself most strongly to the God who has become a man? Is not this even a duty, if the Divinity has taken a body to place himself within the reach of human comprehension and sympathy? That the Trinitarian's views of the Divinity will be coloured more by his visible, tangible, corporeal God, than by those persons of the Trinity who remain comparatively hidden in their invisible and spiritual essence, is so accordant with the principles of our nature as to need no laboured proof.

My friends, hold fast the doctrine of a purely spiritual Divinity. It is one of the great supports and instruments of a vital piety. It brings God near as no other doctrine can. One of the leading purposes of Christianity is to give us an ever-growing sense of God's immediate presence, a consciousness of Him in our souls. Now, just as far as corporeal or limited attributes enter into our conception of Him, we remove Him from us. He becomes an outward, distant being, instead of being viewed and felt as dwelling in the soul itself. It is an unspeakable benefit of the doctrine of a purely spiritual God, that He can be regarded as inhabiting, filling our spiritual nature; and, through this union

with our minds, He can and does become the object of an intimacy and friendship such as no embodied being can call forth.

(3.) Unitarianism is the system most favourable to piety, because it presents a distinct and intelligible object of worship, a being whose nature, whilst inexpressibly sublime, is yet simple and suited to human apprehension. An infinite Father is the most exalted of all conceptions, and yet the least perplexing. It involves no incongruous ideas. It is illustrated by analogies from our own nature. It coincides with that fundamental law of the intellect through which we demand a cause proportioned to effects. It is also as interesting as it is rational; so that it is peculiarly congenial with the improved mind. The sublime simplicity of God as He is taught in Unitarianism, by relieving the understanding from perplexity, and by placing Him within the reach of thought and affection, gives Him peculiar power over the soul. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcilable ideas which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds and all others with which we hold intercourse—is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory, that He cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own nature the relations of Father and Son, or, in other words, is Father and Son to Himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the Supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and impotent; such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism,

instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a strange compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being who presents such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon; and, instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality, and power with the simple doctrine of One Infinite Father?

(4.) Unitarianism promotes a fervent and enlightened piety by asserting the absolute and unbounded perfection of God's character. This is the highest service which can be rendered to mankind. Just and generous conceptions of the Divinity are the soul's true wealth. To spread these is to contribute more effectually than by any other agency to the progress and happiness of the intelligent creation. To obscure God's glory is to do greater wrong than to blot out the sun. The character and influence of a religion must answer to the views which it gives of the Divinity; and there is a plain tendency in that system which manifests the divine perfections most resplendently to awaken the sublimest and most blessed piety.

Now Trinitarianism has a fatal tendency to degrade the character of the Supreme Being, though its advocates, I am sure, intend no such wrong. By multiplying divine persons, it takes from each the glory of independent, all-sufficient, absolute perfection. This may be shown in various particulars. And in the first place, the very idea that three persons in the Divinity are

in any degree important, implies and involves the imperfection of each; for it is plain that if one divine person possesses all possible power, wisdom, love, and happiness, nothing will be gained to Himself or to the creation by joining with Him two, or two hundred other persons. To say that he needs others for any purpose or in any degree, is to strip Him of independent and all sufficient majesty. If our Father in heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not of Himself sufficient to all the wants of his creation; if, by his union with other persons, He can accomplish any good to which He is not of Himself equal; or if He thus acquires a claim to the least degree of trust or hope, to which He is not of Himself entitled by his own independent attributes; then it is plain He is not a being of infinite and absolute perfection. Now Trinitarianism teaches that the highest good accrues to the human race from the existence of three divine persons, sustaining different offices and relations to the world; and it regards the Unitarian as subverting the foundation of human hope, by asserting that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is alone and singly God. Thus it derogates from his infinite glory.

In the next place, Trinitarianism degrades the character of the Supreme Being, by laying its disciples under the necessity of making such a distribution of offices and relations among the three persons, as will serve to designate and distinguish them; for in this way it interferes with the sublime conceptions of One Infinite Person, in whom all glories are concentrated. If we are required to worship three persons, we must view them in different lights, or they will be mere repetitions of each other, mere names and sounds, presenting no objects, conveying no meaning to the mind. Some appropriate character, some peculiar acts, feelings, and relations must be ascribed to each. In other words, the glory of all must be shorn, that some special distinguish-

ing lustre may be thrown on each. Accordingly, creation is associated peculiarly with the conception of the Father; satisfaction for human guilt with that of the Son; whilst sanctification, the noblest work of all, is given to the Holy Spirit as his more particular work. By a still more fatal distribution, the work of justice, the office of vindicating the rights of the Divinity, falls peculiarly to the Father, whilst the loveliness of interposing mercy clothes peculiarly the person of the Son. By this unhappy influence of Trinitarianism, from which common minds at least cannot escape, the splendours of the Godhead, being scattered among three objects instead of being united in One Infinite Father, are dimmed; and he whose mind is thoroughly and practically possessed by this system, can hardly conceive the effulgence of glory in which the One God offers Himself to a pious believer in his strict unity.

But the worst has not been told. I observe, then, in the third place, that if Three Divine Persons are believed in, such an administration or government of the world must be ascribed to them as will furnish them with a sphere of operation. No man will admit three persons into his creed, without finding a use for them. Now, it is an obvious remark, that a system of the universe which involves and demands more than one Infinite Agent, must be wild, extravagant, and unworthy the perfect God; because there is no possible or conceivable good to which such an Agent is not adequate. Accordingly, we find Trinitarianism connecting itself with a scheme of administration exceedingly derogatory to the Divine character. It teaches that the Infinite Father saw fit to put into the hands of our first parents the character and condition of their whole progeny; and that, through one act of disobedience, the whole race bring with them into being a corrupt nature, or are born depraved. It teaches that the offences of, a

short life, though begun and spent under this disastrous influence, merit endless punishment, and that God's law threatens this infinite penalty; and that man is thus burdened with a guilt which no sufferings of the created universe can expiate, which nothing but the sufferings of an Infinite Being can purge away. In this condition of human nature, Trinitarianism finds a sphere of action for its different persons. I am aware that some Trinitarians, on hearing this statement of their system, may reproach me with ascribing to them the errors of Calvinism, a system which they abhor as much as ourselves. But none of the peculiarities of Calvinism enter into this exposition. I have given what I understand to be the leading features of Trinitarianism all the world over; and the benevolent professors of that faith who recoil from this statement must blame not the preacher, but the creeds and establishments by which these doctrines are diffused. For ourselves, we look with horror and grief on the views of God's government which are naturally and intimately united with Trinitarianism. They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a stern and unjust lord. Our filial love and reverence rise up against them. We say to the Trinitarian, touch anything but the perfections of God. Cast no stain on that spotless purity and loveliness. We can endure any errors but those which subvert or unsettle the conviction of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system which makes existence a curse, and wraps the universe in gloom. Leave us the cheerful light, the free and healthful atmosphere of a liberal and rational faith; the ennobling and consoling influences of the doctrine, which nature and revelation in blessed concord teach us, of One Father of unbounded and inexhaustible love.

(5.) Unitarianism is peculiarly favourable to piety, because it accords with nature, with the world around and the world within us; and through this accordance

it gives aid to nature, and receives aid from it, in impressing the mind with God. We live in the midst of a glorious universe, which was meant to be a witness and a preacher of the Divinity; and a revelation from God may be expected to be in harmony with this system, and to carry on a common ministry with it in lifting the soul to God. Now, Unitarianism is in accordance with nature. It teaches One Father, and so does creation, the more it is explored. Philosophy, in proportion as it extends its views of the universe, sees in it more and more, a sublime and beautiful unity, and multiplies proofs that all things have sprung from one intelligence, one power, one love. The whole outward creation proclaims to the Unitarian the truth in which he delights. So does his own soul. But neither nature nor the soul bears one trace of Three Divine Persons. Nature is no Trinitarian. It gives not a hint, not a glimpse of a tri-personal author. Trinitarianism is a confined system, shut up in a few texts, a few written lines, where many of the wisest minds have failed to discover it. It is not inscribed on the heavens and the earth, not borne on every wind, not resounding and re-echoing through the universe. The sun and stars say nothing of a God of three persons. They all speak of the One Father whom *we* adore. To *our* ears, one word and the same voice comes from God's word and works, a full and swelling strain, growing clearer, louder, more thrilling as we listen, and with one blessed influence lifting up our souls to the Almighty Father.

This accordance between nature and revelation increases the power of both over the mind. Concurring as they do in one impression, they make that impression deeper. To men of reflection, the conviction of the reality of religion is exceedingly heightened by a perception of harmony in the views of it which they derive from various sources. Revelation is never re-

ceived with so intimate a persuasion of its truth as when it is seen to conspire to the same ends and impressions for which all other things are made. It is no small objection to Trinitarianism that it is an insulated doctrine, that it reveals a God whom we meet nowhere in the universe. Three Divine Persons, I repeat it, are found only in a few texts, and those so dark that the gifted minds of Milton, Newton, and Locke could not find them there. Nature gives then, not a whisper of evidence. And can they be as real and powerful to the mind as that One Father whom the general strain and common voice of scripture, and the universal voice of nature, call us to adore?

(6.) Unitarianism favours piety by opening the mind to new and ever-enlarging views of God. Teaching, as it does, the same God with nature, it leads us to seek Him in nature. It does not shut us up in the written word, precious as that manifestation of the Divinity is. It considers revelation, not as independent of his other means of instruction; not as a separate agent; but as a part of the great system of God for enlightening and elevating the human soul; as intimately joined with creation and providence, and intended to concur with them; and as given to assist us in reading the volume of the universe. Thus Unitarianism, where its genuine influence is experienced, tends to enrich and fertilize the mind; opens it to new lights, wherever they spring up; and by combining, makes more efficient the means of religious knowledge. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a system which tends to confine the mind; to shut it up in what is written; to diminish its interest in the universe; and to disincline it to bright and enlarged views of God's works. This effect will be explained, in the first place, if we consider that the peculiarities of Trinitarianism differ so much from the teachings of the universe, that he who attaches himself to the one will be in danger of

losing his interest in the other. The ideas of Three Divine Persons, of God clothing Himself in flesh, of the infinite Creator saving the guilty by transferring their punishment to an innocent being, these ideas cannot easily be made to coalesce in the mind with that which nature gives, of One Almighty Father and Unbounded Spirit, whom no worlds can contain, and whose viceroy in the human breast pronounces it a crime to lay the penalties of vice on the pure and unoffending.

But Trinitarianism has a still more positive influence in shutting the mind against improving views from the universe. It tends to throw gloom over God's works. Imagining that Christ is to be exalted by giving him an exclusive agency in enlightening and recovering mankind, it is tempted to disparage other lights and influences; and, for the purpose of magnifying his salvation, it inclines to exaggerate the darkness and desperateness of man's present condition. The mind, thus impressed, naturally leads to those views of nature and of society which will strengthen the ideas of desolation and guilt. It is tempted to aggravate the miseries of life, and, to see in them only the marks of divine displeasure and punishing justice; and overlooks their obvious fitness and design to awaken our powers, exercise our virtues, and strengthen our social ties. In like manner it exaggerates the sins of men, that the need of an infinite atonement may be maintained. Some of the most affecting tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy with disinterested and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for a happiness not found on earth, these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human

character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the new-born child are gravely urged as indications of a native rooted corruption, its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and irrepressible joy, its loveliness and beauty, are not listened to, though they plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. The sacred and tender affections of home ; the unwearied watchings and cheerful sacrifices of parents ; the reverential, grateful assiduity of children, smoothing an aged father's or mother's descent to the grave ; woman's love, stronger than death ; the friendship of brothers and sisters ; the anxious affection, which tends around the bed of sickness ; the subdued voice, which breathes comfort into the mourner's heart ; all the endearing offices, which shed a serene light through our dwellings ; these are explained away by the thorough advocates of this system, so as to include no real virtue, so as to consist with a natural aversion to goodness. Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence, and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called 'the true faith,' are, by the most rigid disciples of the doctrine which I oppose, resolved into the passion for distinction, or some other working of 'unsanctified nature.' Thus, Trinitarianism and its kindred doctrines have a tendency to veil God's goodness, to sully his fairest works, to dim the lustre of those innocent and pure affections which a divine breath kindles in the soul, to blight the beauty and freshness of creation, and in this way to consume the very nutriment of piety. We know, and rejoice to know, that in multitudes this tendency is counteracted, by a cheerful temperament, a benevolent nature, and a strength of gratitude which bursts the shackles of a melancholy system. But, from the nature of the doctrine, the tendency exists, and is strong ; and an impartial observer will often discern it resulting in gloomy, depressing views of life and the universe.

Trinitarianism, by thus tending to exclude bright and enlarged views of the creation, seems to me not only to chill the heart, but to injure the understanding, as far as moral and religious truth is concerned. It does not send the mind far and wide for new and elevating objects; and we have here one explanation of the barrenness and feebleness by which theological writings are so generally marked. It is not wonderful that the prevalent theology should want vitality and enlargement of thought, for it does not accord with the perfections of God and the spirit of the universe. It has not its root in eternal truth, but is a narrow, technical, artificial system, the fabrication of unrefined ages, and consequently incapable of being blended with the new lights which are spreading over the most interesting subjects, and of being incorporated with the results and anticipations of original and progressive minds. It stands apart in the mind, instead of seizing upon new truths, and converting them into its own nutriment. With few exceptions, the Trinitarian theology of the present day is greatly deficient in freshness of thought, and in power to awaken the interest and to meet the intellectual and spiritual wants of thinking men. I see indeed superior minds, and great minds, among the adherents of the prevalent system; but they seem to me to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high function of adding to the wealth of the human intellect. In theological discussion, they remind me more of Samson grinding in the narrow mill of the Philistines, than of that undaunted champion achieving victories for God's people, and enlarging the bounds of their inheritance. Now, a system which has a tendency to confine the mind and to impair its sensibility to the manifestations of God in the universe, is so far unfriendly to piety, to a bright, joyous, hopeful, ever-growing love of the Creator. It tends to generate and nourish a religion of a melancholy tone,

such, I apprehend, as now predominates in the Christian world.

(7.) Unitarianism promotes piety, by the high place which it assigns to piety in the character and work of Jesus Christ. What is it which the Unitarian regards as the chief glory of the character of Christ? I answer, his filial devotion, the entireness with which he surrendered himself to the will and benevolent purposes of God. The piety of Jesus, which on the supposition of his Supreme Divinity, 'is a subordinate and incongruous, is to us, his prominent and crowning attribute. We place his 'oneness with God,' not in an unintelligible unity of essence, but in unity of mind and heart, in the strength of his love, through which he renounced every separate interest, and identified himself with his Father's designs. In other words, filial piety, the consecration of his whole being to the benevolent will of his Father, this is the mild glory in which he always offers himself to our minds; and, of consequence, all our sympathies with him, all our love and veneration towards him, are so many forms of delight in a pious character, and our whole knowledge of him incites us to a like surrender of our whole nature and existence to God.

In the next place, Unitarianism teaches that the highest work or office of Christ is to call forth and strengthen piety in the human breast; and thus it sets before us this character as the chief acquisition and end of our being. To us, the great glory of Christ's mission consists in the power with which he 'reveals the Father,' and establishes the 'kingdom or reign of God within,' the soul. By the crown which he wears, we understand the eminence which he enjoys in the most beneficent work in the universe, that of bringing back the lost mind to the knowledge, love, and likeness of its Creator. With these views of Christ's office, nothing can seem to us so important as an enlightened and profound piety,

and we are quickened to seek it as the perfection and happiness to which nature and redemption jointly summon us.

Now, we maintain that Trinitarianism obscures and weakens these views of Christ's character and work; and this it does by insisting perpetually on others of an incongruous, discordant nature. 'It diminishes the power of his piety. Making him, as it does, the Supreme Being, and placing him as an equal on his Father's throne, it turns the mind from him as the meekest worshipper of God; throws into the shade, as of very inferior worth, his self-denying obedience; and gives us other grounds for revering him than his entire homage, his fervent love, his cheerful self-sacrifice to the Universal Parent. There is a plain incongruity in the belief of his Supreme Godhead with the ideas of filial piety and exemplary devotion. The mind, which has been taught to regard him as of equal majesty and authority with the Father, cannot easily feel the power of his character as the affectionate Son, whose meat it was to do his Father's will. The mind, accustomed to make him the ultimate object of worship, cannot easily recognize in him the pattern of that worship, the guide to the Most High. The characters are incongruous, and their union perplexing, so that neither exerts its full energy on the mind.

Trinitarianism also exhibits the work as well as character of Christ in lights less favourable to piety. It does not make the promotion of piety his chief end. It teaches that the highest purpose of his mission was to reconcile God to man, not man to God. It teaches that the most formidable obstacle to human happiness lies in the claims and threatenings of divine justice. Hence it leads men to prize Christ more for answering these claims, and averting these threatenings, than for awakening in the human soul sentiments of love towards its Father in heaven. Accordingly, multitudes

seem to prize pardon more than piety, and think it a greater boon to escape, through Christ's sufferings, the fire of hell, than to receive, through his influence, the spirit of heaven, the spirit of devotion. Is such a system propitious to a generous and ever-growing piety?

If I may be allowed a short digression, I would conclude this head with the general observation, that we deem our views of Jesus Christ more interesting than those of Trinitarianism. We feel that we should lose much, by exchanging the distinct character and mild radiance with which he offers himself to our minds, for the confused and irreconcilable glories with which that system labours to invest him. According to Unitarianism, he is a being who may be understood, for he is one mind, one conscious nature. According to the opposite faith, he is an inconceivable compound of two most dissimilar minds, joining in one person a finite and infinite nature, a soul weak and ignorant, and a soul almighty and omniscient. And is such a being a proper object for human thought and affection?—I add, as another important consideration, that to us Jesus, instead of being the second of three obscure unintelligible persons, is first and pre-eminent in the sphere in which he acts, and is thus the object of a distinct attachment, which he shares with no equals or rivals. To us, he is first of the sons of God, the Son by peculiar nearness and likeness to the Father. He is first of all the ministers of God's mercy and beneficence, and through him the largest stream of bounty flows to the creation. He is first in God's favour and love, the most accepted of worshippers, the most prevalent of intercessors. In this mighty universe, framed to be a mirror of its Author, we turn to Jesus as the brightest image of God, and gratefully yield him a place in our souls, second only to the Infinite Father, to whom he himself directs our supreme affection.

(8.) I now proceed to a great topic. Unitarianism promotes piety by meeting the wants of man as a sinner. The wants of the sinner may be expressed almost in one word. He wants assurances of mercy in his Creator. He wants pledges that God is Love in its purest form, that is, that He has a goodness so disinterested, free, full, strong, and immutable, that the ingratitude and disobedience of his creatures cannot overcome it. This unconquerable love, which in Scripture is denominated grace, and which waits not for merit to call it forth, but flows out to the most guilty, is the sinner's only hope, and it is fitted to call forth the most devoted gratitude. Now, this grace or mercy of God, which seeks the lost, and receives and blesses the returning child, is proclaimed by that faith which we advocate, with a clearness and energy which cannot be surpassed. Unitarianism will not listen for a moment to the common errors by which this bright attribute is obscured. It will not hear of a vindictive wrath in God which must be quenched by blood, or of a justice which binds his mercy with an iron chain until its demands are satisfied to the full. It will not hear that God needs any foreign influence to awaken his mercy, but teaches that the yearnings of the tenderest human parent towards a lost child are but a faint image of God's deep and overflowing compassion towards erring men. This essential and unchangeable propensity of the Divine Mind to forgiveness, the Unitarian beholds shining forth through the whole Word of God, and especially in the mission and revelation of Jesus Christ, who lived and died to make manifest the inexhaustible plenitude of divine grace; and, aided by revelation, he sees this attribute of God everywhere, both around him and within him. He sees it in the sun which shines, and the rain which descends on the evil and unthankful; in the peace which returns to the mind in proportion to its return to God and duty; in the sentiment of compassion which springs

up spontaneously in the human breast towards the fallen and lost; and in the moral instinct which teaches us to cherish this compassion as a sacred principle, as an emanation of God's infinite love. In truth, Unitarianism asserts so strongly the mercy of God, that the reproach thrown upon it is that it takes from the sinner the dread of punishment,—a reproach wholly without foundation; for our system teaches that God's mercy is not an instinctive tenderness, which cannot inflict pain; but an all-wise love, which desires the true and lasting good of its object, and consequently desires first for the sinner that restoration to purity, without which shame, and suffering, and exile from God and heaven are of necessity and unalterably his doom. Thus Unitarianism holds forth God's grace and forgiving goodness most resplendently; and, by this manifestation of Him, it tends to awaken a tender and confiding piety; an ingenuous love, which mourns that it has offended; an ingenuous aversion to sin, not because sin brings punishment, but because it separates the mind from this merciful Father.

Now, we object to Trinitarianism, that it obscures the mercy of God. It does so in various ways. We have already seen that it gives such views of God's government, that we can hardly conceive of this attribute as entering into his character. Mercy to the sinner is the principle of love or benevolence in its highest form; and surely this cannot be expected from a being who brings us into existence burdened with hereditary guilt, and who threatens with endless punishment and woe the heirs of so frail and feeble a nature. With such a Creator the idea of mercy cannot coalesce: and I will say more, that under such a government man would need no mercy; for he would owe no allegiance to such a Maker, and could not, of course, contract the guilt of violating it; and without guilt, no grace or pardon would be wanted. The severity of this system would place him on the ground of an injured being. The wrong would lie on the side of the Creator.

In the next place, Trinitarianism obscures God's mercy by the manner in which it supposes pardon to be communicated. It teaches that God remits the punishment of the offender in consequence of receiving an equivalent from an innocent person; that the sufferings of the sinner are removed by a full satisfaction made to divine justice in the sufferings of a substitute. And is this 'the quality of mercy?' What means forgiveness, but the reception of the returning child through the strength of parental love? This doctrine invests the Saviour with a claim of merit, with a right to the remission of the sins of his followers; and represents God's reception of the penitent as a recompense due to the worth of his Son. And is mercy, which means free and undeserved love, made more manifest, more resplendent, by the introduction of merit and right as the ground of our salvation? Could a surer expedient be invented for obscuring its freeness, and for turning the sinner's gratitude from the sovereign who demands, to the sufferer who offers, full satisfaction for his guilt?

I know it is said that Trinitarianism magnifies God's mercy, because it teaches that He Himself provided the substitute for the guilty. But I reply, that the work here ascribed to mercy is not the most appropriate, nor most fitted to manifest it and impress it on the heart. This may be made apparent by familiar illustrations. Suppose that a creditor, through compassion to certain debtors, should persuade a benevolent and opulent man to pay him in their stead. Would not the debtors see a greater mercy, and feel a weightier obligation, if they were to receive a free, gratuitous release? And will not their chief gratitude stray beyond the creditor to the benevolent substitute? Or, suppose that a parent, unwilling to inflict a penalty on a disobedient but feeble child, should persuade a stronger child to bear it. Would not the offender see a more touching mercy in a free forgiveness, springing immediately from a parent's

heart, than in "this circuitous remission? And will he not be tempted to turn with his strongest love to the generous sufferer? In this process of substitution, of which Trinitarianism boasts so loudly, the mercy of God becomes complicated with the rights and merits of the substitute, and is a more distant cause of our salvation. These rights and merits are nearer, more visible, and more than divide the glory with grace and mercy in our rescue. They turn the mind from Divine Goodness, as the only spring of its happiness and only rock of its hope. Now this is to deprive piety of one of its chief means of growth and joy. Nothing should stand between the soul and God's mercy. Nothing should share with mercy the work of our salvation. Christ's intercession should ever be regarded as an application to love and mercy, not as a demand of justice, not as a claim of merit. I grieve to say that Christ, as now viewed by multitudes, hides the lustre of that very attribute which it is his great purpose to display. I fear that, to many, Jesus wears the glory of a more winning, tender mercy, than his Father, and that he is regarded as the sinner's chief resource. Is this the way to invigorate piety?

Trinitarians imagine that there is one view of their system peculiarly fitted to give peace and hope to the sinner, and consequently to promote gratitude and love. It is this. They say, it provides an Infinite substitute for the sinner, than which nothing can give greater relief to the burdened conscience. Jesus, being the second person of the Trinity, was able to make infinite satisfaction for sin; and what, they ask, in Unitarianism can compare with this? I have time only for two brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an Infinite satisfaction, or, as it is improperly called, of an Infinite atonement, subverts, instead of building up, hope; because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism

teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child; could be remitted without an infinite expiation, I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written, like Draco's, in blood; and, instead of thanking the Sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But He who framed all souls, and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom as to have constituted a universe which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine, of an Infinite substitute suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its severe character is overlooked. Let me, then, set it before you in new terms and by a new illustration; and if, in so doing, I may wound the feelings of some who hear me, I beg them to believe that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth. Suppose, then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare that this execution was appointed as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice, and of the infinite woe denounced by his law: and suppose him to add that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue. Would you not tell him that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to

him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood was terror, not paternal love; and that the obedience which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that, much more, the angels, whose pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer, as a substitute, the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and the vilest malefactors; and he suffers this punishment that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe. I am indeed aware that multitudes who profess this doctrine are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as intended to show that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope nothing from God. Their minds turn, by a generous instinct, from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love, and hope; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. Not a few may shudder at the illustration which I have here given; but in what respects it is unjust to the popular doctrine of atonement I

cannot discern. I grieve to shock sincere Christians, of whatever name; but I grieve more for the corruption of our common faith, which I have now felt myself bound to expose.

I have a second objection to this doctrine of Infinite atonement. When examined minutely, and freed from ambiguous language, it vanishes into air. It is wholly delusion. The Trinitarian tells me that, according to his system, we have an infinite substitute; that the Infinite God was pleased to bear our punishment, and consequently that pardon is made sure. But I ask him, Do I understand you? Do you mean that the Great God, who never changes, whose happiness is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that this Eternal Being really bore the penalty of my sins—really suffered and died? Every pious man, when pressed by this question, answers, No. What, then, does the doctrine of Infinite atonement mean? Why, this; that God took into union with Himself our nature, that is, a human body and soul; and these bore the suffering for our sins; and, through his union with these, God may be said to have borne it Himself. Thus this vaunted system goes out—in words. The Infinite victim proves to be frail man, and God's share in the sacrifice is a mere fiction. I ask with solemnity, Can this doctrine give one moment's ease to the conscience of an unbiased, thinking man? Does it not unsettle all hope, by making the whole religion suspicious and unsure? I am compelled to say that I see in it no impression of majesty, or wisdom, or love, nothing worthy of a God; and when I compare it with that nobler faith which directs our eyes and hearts to God's essential mercy, as our only hope, I am amazed that any should ascribe to it superior efficacy, as a religion for sinners, as a means of filling the soul with pious trust and love. I know, indeed that some will say that, in giving up an infinite atonement, I deprive myself of all hope of divine favour.

To such I would say, You do wrong to God's mercy. On that mercy I cast myself without a fear. I indeed desire Christ to intercede for me. I regard his relation to me as God's kindest appointment. Through him 'grace and truth come' to me from Heaven, and I look forward to his friendship as among the highest blessings of my whole future being. But I cannot and dare not ask him to offer an infinite satisfaction for my sins : to appease the wrath of God ; to reconcile the Universal Father to his own offspring ; to open to me those arms of Divine mercy which have encircled and borne me from the first moment of my being. The essential and unbounded mercy of my Creator is the foundation of my hope, and a broader and surer the universe cannot give me.

(9.) I now proceed to the last consideration which the limits of this discourse will permit me to urge. It has been more than once suggested, but deserves to be distinctly stated. I observe, then, that Unitarianism promotes piety because it is a rational religion. By this I do not mean that its truths can be fully comprehended ; for there is not an object in nature or religion which has not innumerable connections and relations beyond our grasp of thought. I mean that its doctrines are consistent with one another, and with all established truth. Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation ; with the laws and powers of human nature ; with the dictates of the moral sense ; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul ; and with the lights which the universe throws on the character of its Author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit ; for a religion thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundations of universal

empire in the breast; and the heart, finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully, without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator.

To Trinitarianism we object, what has always been objected to it, that it contradicts and degrades reason, and thus exposes the mind to the worst delusions. Some of its advocates, more courageous than prudent, have even recommended 'the prostration of the understanding,' as preparatory to its reception. Its chief doctrine is an outrage on our rational nature. Its three persons who constitute its God must either be frittered away into three unmeaning distinctions, into sounds signifying nothing; or they are three conscious agents, who cannot, by any human art or metaphysical device, be made to coalesce into one being; who cannot be really viewed as one mind, having one consciousness and one will. Now a religious system, the cardinal principle of which offends the understanding, very naturally conforms itself throughout to this prominent feature, and becomes prevalently irrational. He who is compelled to defend his faith in any particular, by the plea that human reason is so depraved through the fall as to be an inadequate judge of religion, and that God is honoured by our reception of what shocks the intellect, seems to have no defence left against accumulated absurdities. According to these principles, the fanatic who exclaimed, 'I believe, because it is impossible,' had a fair title to canonization. Reason is too godlike a faculty to be insulted with impunity. Accordingly Trinitarianism, as we have seen, links itself with several degrading errors; and its most natural alliance is with Calvinism, that cruel faith, which, stripping God of mercy and man of power, has made Christianity an instrument of torture to the timid, and an object of doubt or scorn to hardier spirits. I repeat it, a doctrine which violates reason like the Trinity, prepares its advocates, in proportion as it is incorporated into the

mind, for worse and worse delusions. It breaks down the distinctions and barriers between truth and falsehood. It creates a diseased taste for prodigies, fictions, and exaggerations, for startling mysteries, and wild dreams of enthusiasm. It destroys the relish for the simple, chaste, serene beauties of truth. Especially when the prostration of understanding is taught as an act of piety, we cannot wonder that the grossest superstitions should be devoured, and that the credulity of the multitude should keep pace with the forgeries of imposture and fanaticism. The history of the Church is the best comment on the effects of divorcing reason from religion; and if the present age is disburdened of many of the superstitions under which Christianity and human nature groaned for ages, it owes its relief in no small degree to the reinstating of reason in her long violated rights.

The injury to religion from irrational doctrines, when thoroughly believed, is immense. The human soul has a unity. Its various faculties are adapted to one another. One life pervades it; and its beauty, strength, and growth depend on nothing so much as on the harmony and joint action of all its principles. To wound and degrade it in any of its powers, and especially in the noble and distinguishing power of reason, is to inflict on it universal injury. No notion is more false than that the heart is to thrive by dwarfing the intellect; that perplexing doctrines are the best food of piety; that religion flourishes most luxuriantly in mist and darkness. Reason was given for God as its great object; and for Him it should be kept sacred, invigorated, clarified, protected from human usurpation, and inspired with a meek self-reverence.

The soul never acts so effectually or joyfully as when all its powers and affections conspire; as when thought and feeling, reason and sensibility, are called forth together by one great and kindling object. It

will never devote itself to God with its whole energy whilst its guiding faculty sees in Him a being to shock and confound it. We want a harmony in our inward nature. We want a piety which will join light and fervour, and on which the intellectual power will look benignantly. We want religion to be so exhibited that, in the clearest moments of the intellect, its signatures of truth will grow brighter; that, instead of tottering, it will gather strength and stability from the progress of the human mind. These wants we believe to be met by Unitarian Christianity, and therefore we prize it as the best friend of piety.

I have thus stated the chief grounds on which I rest the claim of Unitarianism to the honour of promoting an enlightened, profound, and happy piety.

Am I now asked, why we prize our system, and why we build churches for its inculcation? If I may be allowed to express myself in the name of conscientious Unitarians, who apply their doctrine to their own hearts and lives, I would reply thus: We prize and would spread our views, because we believe that they reveal God to us in greater glory, and bring us nearer to Him, than any other. We are conscious of a deep want, which the creation cannot supply—the want of a Perfect Being, on whom the strength of our love may be centred, and of an Almighty Father, in whom our weaknesses, imperfections, and sorrows may find resource; and such a Being and Father Unitarian Christianity sets before us. For this we prize it above all price. We can part with every other good. We can endure the darkening of life's fairest prospects. But this bright, consoling doctrine of One God, even the Father, is dearer than life, and we cannot let it go.—Through this faith, everything grows brighter to our view. Born of such a Parent, we esteem our existence an inestimable gift. We meet everywhere our Father, and his presence is as a sun shining on our path. We

see Him in his works, and hear his praise rising from every spot which we tread. We feel Him near in our solitudes, and sometimes enjoy communion with Him more tender than human friendship. We see Him in our duties, and perform them more gladly because they are the best tribute we can offer our Heavenly Benefactor. Even the consciousness of sin, mournful as it is, does not subvert our peace ; for, in the mercy of God, as made manifest in Jesus Christ, we see an inexhaustible fountain of strength, purity, and pardon, for all who, in filial reliance, seek these heavenly gifts.—Through this faith, we are conscious of a new benevolence springing up to our fellow-creatures, purer and more enlarged than natural affection. Towards all mankind we see a rich and free love flowing from the common Parent, and, touched by this love, we are the friends of all. We compassionate the most guilty, and would win them back to God.—Through this faith, we receive the happiness of an ever-enlarging hope. There is no good too vast for us to anticipate for the universe or for ourselves, from such a Father as we believe in. We hope from Him, what we deem his greatest gift, even the gift of his own Spirit, and the happiness of advancing for ever in truth and virtue, in power and love, in union of mind with the Father and the Son.—We are told, indeed, that our faith will not prove an anchor in the last hour. But we have known those whose departure it has brightened ; and our experience of its power, in trial and peril, has proved it to be equal to all the wants of human nature. We doubt not that, to its sincere followers, death will be a transition to the calm, pure, joyful mansions prepared by Christ for his disciples. There we expect to meet that great and good Deliverer. With the eye of faith, we already see him looking round him with celestial love on all, of every name, who have imbibed his spirit. His spirit ; his loyal and entire devotion to the will of his Heavenly

Father; his universal, unconquerable benevolence, through which he freely gave from his pierced side his blood, his life for the salvation of the world; this divine love, and not creeds, and names, and forms, will then be found to attract his supreme regard. This spirit we trust to see in multitudes of every sect and name; and we trust, too, that they who now reproach us will at that day recognize, in the dreaded Unitarian, this only badge of Christ, and will bid him welcome to the joy of our common Lord.—I have thus stated the views with which we have reared this building. We desire to glorify God, to promote a purer, nobler, happier piety. Even if we err in doctrine, we think that these motives should shield us from reproach; should disarm that intolerance which would exclude us from the church on earth, and from our Father's house in heaven.

We end as we began, by offering up this building to the Only Living and True God. We have erected it amidst our private habitations, as a remembrancer of our Creator. We have reared it in this busy city, as a retreat for pious meditation and prayer. We dedicate it to the King and Father Eternal, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We dedicate it to his Unity, to his unrivalled and undivided Majesty. We dedicate it to the praise of his free, unbought, unmerited grace. We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, to the memory of his love, to the celebration of his divine virtue, to the preaching of that truth which he sealed with blood. We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit, to the sanctifying influence of God, to those celestial emanations of light and strength which visit and refresh the devout mind. We dedicate it to prayers and praises which, we trust, will be continued and perfected in heaven. We dedicate it to social worship, to Christian intercourse, to the communion of saints. We dedicate it to the cause of pure morals, of public order, of temperance, uprightness, and general goodwill. We dedicate it to Christian admoni-

tion, to those warnings, remonstrances, and earnest and tender persuasions, by which the sinner may be arrested and brought back to God. We dedicate it to Christian consolation, to those truths which assuage sorrow, animate penitence, and lighten the load of human anxiety and fear. We dedicate it to the doctrine of Immortality, to sublime and joyful hopes which reach beyond the grave. In a word, we dedicate it to the great work of perfecting the human soul, and fitting it for nearer approach to its Author. Here may heart meet heart! Here may man meet God! From this place may the song of praise, the ascription of gratitude, the sigh of penitence, the prayer for grace, and the holy resolve, ascend as fragrant incense to Heaven; and, through many generations, may parents bequeath to their children this house, as a sacred spot, where God had 'lifted upon them his countenance,' and given them pledges of his everlasting love!

SPIRITUAL FREEDOM.¹

(1830)

IT has pleased the All-wise Disposer to encompass us from our birth by difficulty and allurements, to place us in a world where wrong-doing is often gainful, and duty rough and perilous, where many voices oppose the dictates of the inward monitor, where the body presses as a weight on the mind, and matter, by its perpetual agency on the senses, becomes a barrier between us and the spiritual world. We are in the midst of influences which menace the intellect and heart; and to be free is to withstand and conquer these.

I call that mind free which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life, not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which escapes the bondage of matter, which, instead of stopping at the material universe and making it a prison wall, passes beyond it to its Author, and finds in the radiant signatures which it everywhere bears of the Infinite Spirit, helps to its own spiritual enlargement.

I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights and powers, which calls no man master, which does not content itself with a passive or heredi-

¹ Selections from a sermon preached before the Governor and Council of Massachusetts, May 26th, 1830.

tary faith, which opens itself to light whencesoever it may come, which receives new truth as an angel from heaven, which, whilst consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself, and uses instructions from abroad not to supersede but to quicken and exalt its own energies.

I call that mind free which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children, which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free which is not passively framed by outward circumstances, which is not swept away by the torrent of events, which is not the creature of accidental impulse, but which bends events to its own improvement, and acts from an inward spring, from immutable principles which it has deliberately espoused.

I call that mind free which protects itself against the usurpations of society, which does not cower to human opinion, which feels itself accountable to a higher tribunal than man's, which respects a higher law than fashion, which respects itself too much to be the slave or tool of the many or the few.

I call that mind free which, through confidence in God and in the power of virtue, has cast off all fear but that of wrong-doing, which no menace or peril can enthrall, which is calm in the midst of tumults, and possesses itself though all else be lost.

I call that mind free which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions.

I call that mind free which is jealous of its own freedom, which guards itself from being merged in others, which guards its empire over itself as nobler than the empire of the world.

In fine, I call that mind free which, conscious of its affinity with God, and confiding in his promises by Jesus Christ, devotes itself faithfully to the unfolding of all its powers, which passes the bounds of time and death, which hopes to advance for ever, and which finds inexhaustible power, both for action and suffering, in the prospect of immortality.

Such is the spiritual freedom which Christ came to give. It consists in moral force, in self-control, in the enlargement of thought and affection, and in the unrestrained action of our best powers. This is the great good of Christianity, nor can we conceive a greater within the gift of God. I know that to many this will seem too refined a good to be proposed as the great end of society and government. But our scepticism cannot change the nature of things. I know how little this freedom is understood or enjoyed, how enslaved men are to sense, and passion, and the world; and I know, too, that through this slavery they are wretched, and that while it lasts no social institution can give them happiness.

I now proceed, as I proposed, to show that civil or political liberty is of little worth but as it springs from, expresses, and invigorates this spiritual freedom. I account civil liberty as the chief good of states, because it accords with, and ministers to, energy and elevation of mind. Nor is this a truth so remote or obscure as to need laborious proof or illustration. For consider what civil liberty means. It consists in the removal of all restraint but such as the public weal demands. And what is the end and benefit of removing restraint? It is that men may put forth their powers and act from themselves. Vigorous and invigorating action is the

chief fruit of all outward freedom. Why break the chains from the captive but that he may bring into play his liberated limbs? Why open his prison but that he may go forth, and open his eyes on a wide prospect, and exert and enjoy his various energies? Liberty, which does not minister to action and the growth of power, is only a name, is no better than slavery.

The chief benefit of free institutions is clear and unutterably precious. Their chief benefit is that they aid freedom of mind, that they give scope to man's faculties, that they throw him on his own resources, and summon him to work out his own happiness. It is that, by removing restraint from intellect, they favour force, originality, and enlargement of thought. It is that, by removing restraint from worship, they favour the ascent of the soul to God. It is that, by removing restraint from industry, they stir up invention and enterprise to explore and subdue the material world, and thus rescue the race from those sore physical wants and pains which narrow and blight the mind. It is that they cherish noble sentiments, frankness, courage, and self-respect.

Free institutions contribute in no small degree to freedom and force of mind, by teaching the essential equality of men, and their right and duty to govern themselves; and I cannot but consider the superiority of an elective government as consisting very much in the testimony which it bears to these ennobling truths. It has often been said that a good code of laws, and not the form of government, is what determines a people's happiness. But good laws, if not springing from the community, if imposed by a master, would lose much of their value. The best code is that which has its origin in the will of the people who obey it; which, whilst it speaks with authority, still recognizes self-government as the primary right and duty of a rational being; and which thus cherishes in the individual, be his condition what it may, a just self-respect.

We may learn that the chief good and the most precious fruit of civil liberty is spiritual freedom and power, by considering what is the chief evil of tyranny. I know that tyranny does evil by invading men's outward interests, by making property and life insecure, by robbing the labourer to pamper the noble and king. But its worst influence is *within*. Its chief curse is that it breaks and tames the spirit, sinks man in his own eyes, takes away vigour of thought and action, substitutes for conscience an outward rule, makes him abject, cowardly, a parasite, and a cringing slave. This is the curse of tyranny. It wars with the soul, and thus it wars with God. We read in theologians and poets of angels fighting against the Creator, of battles in heaven. But God's throne in heaven is unassailable. The only war against God is against his image, against the divine principle in the soul, and this is waged by tyranny in all its forms. We here see the chief curse of tyranny; and this should teach us that civil freedom is a blessing chiefly as it reverences the human soul and ministers to its growth and power.

Without this inward spiritual freedom outward liberty is of little worth. What boots it that I am crushed by no foreign yoke if, through ignorance and vice, through selfishness and fear, I want the command of my own mind? The worst tyrants are those which establish themselves in our own breast. The man who wants force of principle and purpose is a slave, however free the air he breathes. The mind, after all, is our only possession, or, in other words, we possess all things through its energy and enlargement; and civil institutions are to be estimated by the free and pure minds to which they give birth.

It will be seen from these remarks, that I consider the freedom or moral strength of the individual mind as the supreme good, and the highest end of government. I am aware that other views are often taken. It is said

that government is intended for the public, for the community, not for the individual. The idea of a national interest prevails in the minds of statesmen, and to this it is thought that the individual may be sacrificed. But I would maintain, that the individual is not made for the state so much as the state for the individual. A man is not created for political relations as his highest end, but for indefinite spiritual progress, and is placed in political relations as the means of his progress. The human soul is greater, more sacred, than the state, and must never be sacrificed to it. The human soul is to outlive all earthly institutions. The distinction of nations is to pass away. Thrones which have stood for ages are to meet the doom pronounced upon all man's works. But the individual mind survives, and the obscurest subject, if true to God, will rise to a power never wielded by earthly potentates.

A human being is a member of the community, not as a limb is a member of the body, or as a wheel is a part of a machine, intended only to contribute to some general, joint result. He was created, not to be merged in the whole, as a drop in the ocean, or as a particle of sand on the sea-shore, and to aid only in composing a mass. He is an ultimate being, made for his own perfection as the highest end, made to maintain an individual existence, and to serve others only as far as consists with his own virtue and progress. Hitherto governments have tended greatly to obscure this importance of the individual, to depress him in his own eyes, to give him the idea of an outward interest more important than the invisible soul, and of an outward authority more sacred than the voice of God in his own secret conscience. Rulers have called the private man the property of the state, meaning generally by the state themselves, and thus the many have been immolated to the few, and have even believed that this was their highest destination. These views cannot be too

earnestly withstood. Nothing seems to me so needful as to give to the mind the consciousness, which governments have done so much to suppress, of its own separate worth. Let the individual feel that, through his immortality, he may concentrate in his own being a greater good than that of nations. Let him feel that he is placed in the community, not to part with his individuality or to become a tool, but that he should find a sphere for his various powers, and a preparation for immortal glory. To me, the progress of society consists in nothing more than in bringing out the individual, in giving him a consciousness of his own being, and in quickening him to strengthen and elevate his own mind.

In thus maintaining that the individual is the end of social institutions, I may be thought to discourage public efforts and the sacrifice of private interests to the state. Far from it. No man, I affirm, will serve his fellow-beings so effectually, so fervently, as he who is not their slave; as he who, casting off every other yoke, subjects himself to the law of duty in his own mind. For this law enjoins a disinterested and generous spirit as man's glory and likeness to his Maker. Individuality, or moral self-subsistence, is the surest foundation of an all-comprehending love. No man so multiplies his bonds with the community as he who watches most jealously over his own perfection. There is a beautiful harmony between the good of the state and the moral freedom and dignity of the individual. Were it not so, were these interests in any case discordant, were an individual ever called to serve his country by acts debasing his own mind, he ought not to waver a moment as to the good which he should prefer. Property, life, he should joyfully surrender to the state. But his soul he must never stain or enslave. From poverty, pain, the rack, the gibbet, he should not recoil; but for no good of others ought he to part with self-control or violate the inward law. We speak of the patriot as

sacrificing himself to the public weal. Do we mean that he sacrifices what is most properly himself, the principle of piety and virtue? Do we not feel that, however great may be the good which 'through his sufferings accrues to the state, a greater and purer glory redounds to himself, and that the most precious fruit of his disinterested services is the strength of resolution and philanthropy, which is accumulated in his own soul?

I have thus endeavoured to illustrate and support the doctrine that spiritual freedom, or force and elevation of soul, is the great good to which civil freedom is subordinate, and which all social institutions should propose as their supreme end.

Religion gives life, strength, elevation to the mind, by connecting it with the Infinite Mind; by teaching it to regard itself as the offspring and care of the Infinite Father, who created it that He might communicate to it his own spirit and perfections, who framed it for truth and virtue, who framed it for Himself, who subjects it to sore trials, that by conflict and endurance it may grow strong, and who has sent his Son to purify it from every sin, and to clothe it with immortality. It is religion alone which nourishes patient, resolute hopes and efforts for our own souls. Without it we can hardly escape self-contempt and the contempt of our race. Without God our existence has no support, our life no aim, our improvements no permanence, our best labours no sure and enduring results, our spiritual weakness no power to lean upon, and our noblest aspirations and desires no pledge of being realized in a better state. Struggling virtue has no friend; suffering virtue no promise of victory. Take away God, and life becomes mean, and man poorer than the brute. I am accustomed to speak of the greatness of human nature; but it is great only through its parentage; great because descended from God, because connected with a goodness

and power from which it is to be enriched for ever ; and nothing but the consciousness of this connection can give that hope of elevation through which alone the mind is to rise to true strength and liberty.

All the truths of religion conspire to one end—spiritual liberty. All the objects, which it offers to our thoughts are sublime, kindling, exalting. Its fundamental truth is the existence of one God, one Infinite and Everlasting Father ; and it teaches us to look on the universe as pervaded, quickened, and vitally joined into one harmonious and beneficent whole, by his ever-present and omnipotent love. By this truth it breaks the power of matter and sense, of present pleasure and pain, of anxiety and fear. It turns the mind from the visible, the outward and perishable, to the Unseen, Spiritual, and Eternal, and, allying it with pure and great objects, makes it free.

• I well know that what I now say may seem to some to want the sanction of experience. By many religion is perhaps regarded as the last principle to give inward energy and freedom. I may be told of its threatenings, and of the bondage which they impose. I acknowledge that religion has threatenings, and it *must* have them ; for evil, misery, is necessarily and unchangeably bound up with wrong-doing, with the abuse of moral power. From the nature of things, a mind disloyal to God and duty must suffer ; and religion, in uttering this, only re-echoes the plain teaching of conscience. But let it be remembered that the single end of the threatenings of religion is to make us spiritually free. They are all directed against the passions which enthrall and degrade us. They are weapons given to conscience, with which to fight the good fight, and to establish its throne within us. When not thus used, they are turned from their end ; and if by injudicious preaching they engender superstition, let not the fault be laid at the door of religion.

I do not indeed wonder that so many doubt the power of religion to give strength, dignity, and freedom to the mind. What bears this name too often yields no such fruits. Here, religion is a form, a round of prayers and rites, an attempt to propitiate God by flattery and fawning. There, it is terror and subjection to a minister or priest; and there, it is a violence of emotion, bearing away the mind like a whirlwind, and robbing it of self-direction. But true religion disclaims connection with these usurpers of its name. It is a calm, deep conviction of God's paternal interest in the improvement, happiness, and honour of his creatures; a practical persuasion that He delights in virtue and not in forms and flatteries, and that He especially delights in resolute effort to conform ourselves to the disinterested love and rectitude which constitute his own glory. It is for this religion that I claim the honour of giving dignity and freedom to the mind.

The need of religion to accomplish this work is in no degree superseded by what is called the progress of society. I should say that civilization, so far from being able of itself to give moral strength and elevation, includes causes of degradation which nothing but the religious principle can withstand. It multiplies, undoubtedly, the comforts and enjoyments of life; but in these I see sore trials and perils to the soul. These minister to the sensual element in human nature, to that part of our constitution which allies—and too often enslaves—us to the earth. Of consequence, civilization needs that proportional aid should be given to the spiritual element in man, and I know not where it is to be found but in religion. Without this the civilized man, with all his properties and refinements, rises little in true dignity above the savage whom he disdains. You tell me of civilization; of its arts and sciences, as the sure instruments of human elevation. You tell me, how by these man masters and bends to his use the

powers of nature. I know he masters them, but it is to become in turn their slave. He explores and cultivates the earth, but it is to grow more earthly. He explores the hidden mine, but it is to forge himself chains. He visits all regions, but therefore lives a stranger to his own soul. In the very progress of civilization I see the need of an antagonist principle to the senses, of a power to free man from matter, to recall him from the outward to the inward world; and religion alone is equal to so great a work.

The advantages of civilization have their peril. In such a state of society opinion and law impose salutary restraint, and produce general order and security. But the power of opinion grows into a despotism which more than all things represses original and free thought, subverts individuality of character, reduces the community to a spiritual monotony, and chills the love of perfection. Religion, considered simply as the principle which balances the power of human opinion, which takes man out of the grasp of custom and fashion, and teaches him to refer himself to a higher tribunal, is an infinite aid to moral strength and elevation.

An important benefit of civilization, of which we hear much from the political economist, is the division of labour, by which arts are perfected. But this, by confining the mind to an unceasing round of petty operations, tends to break it into littleness. We possess improved fabrics, but deteriorated men. Another advantage of civilization is that manners are refined, and accomplishments multiplied; but these are continually seen to supplant simplicity of character, strength of feeling, the love of nature, the love of inward beauty and glory. Under outward courtesy we see a cold selfishness, a spirit of calculation, and little energy of love.

I confess I look round on civilized society with many fears, and with more and more earnest desire that a

regenerating" spirit from heaven, from religion, may descend upon and pervade it. I particularly fear that various causes are acting powerfully among ourselves to inflame and madden that enslaving and degrading principle, the passion for property. For example, the absence of hereditary distinctions in our country gives prominence to the distinction of wealth, and holds up this as the chief prize to ambition. Add to this the epicurean self-indulgent habits which our prosperity has multiplied, and which crave insatiably for enlarging wealth as the only means of gratification. This peril is increased by the spirit of our times, which is a spirit of commerce, industry, internal improvements, mechanical invention, political economy, and peace. Think not that I would disparage commerce, mechanical skill, and especially pacific connections among states. But there is danger that these blessings may by perversion issue in a slavish love of lucre. It seems to me that some of the objects which once moved men most powerfully are gradually losing their sway, and thus the mind is left more open to the excitement of wealth. For example, military distinction is taking the inferior place which it deserves; and the consequence will be, that the energy and ambition which have been exhausted in war will seek new directions; and happy shall we be if they do not flow into the channel of gain. So I think that political eminence is to be less and less coveted; and there is danger that the energies absorbed by it will be spent in seeking another kind of dominion—the dominion of property. And if such be the result, what shall we gain by what is called the progress of society? What shall we gain by national peace, if men, instead of meeting on the field of battle, wage with one another the more inglorious strife of dishonest and rapacious traffic? What shall we gain by the waning of political ambition if the intrigues of the exchange take the place of those of the cabinet, and private

pomp and luxury be substituted for the splendour of public life? I am no foe to civilization. I rejoice in its progress. But I mean to say that, without a pure religion to modify its tendencies, to inspire and refine it, we shall be corrupted, not ennobled by it. It is the excellence of the religious principle, that it aids and carries forward civilization, extends science and arts, multiplies the conveniences and ornaments of life, and at the same time spoils them of their enslaving power, and even converts them into means and ministers of that spiritual freedom which, when left to themselves, they endanger and destroy.

In order, however, that religion should yield its full and best fruits, one thing is necessary; and the times require that I should state it with great distinctness. It is necessary that religion should be held and professed in a liberal spirit. Just as far as it assumes an intolerant, exclusive, sectarian form, it subverts instead of strengthening the soul's freedom, and becomes the heaviest and most galling yoke, which is laid on the intellect and conscience. Religion must be viewed, not as a monopoly of priests, ministers, or sects; not as conferring on any man a right to dictate to his fellow-beings; not as an instrument by which the few may awe the many; not as bestowing on one a prerogative which is not enjoyed by all; but as the property of every human being, and as the great subject for every human mind. It must be regarded as the revelation of a common Father, to whom all have equal access, who invites all to the like immediate communion, who has no favourites, who has appointed no infallible expounders of his will, who opens his works and word to every eye, and calls upon all to read for themselves, and to follow fearlessly the best convictions of their own understandings. Let religion be seized on by individuals or sects as their special province: let them clothe themselves with God's prerogative of judgment;

let them succeed in enforcing their creed by penalties of law or penalties of opinion; let them succeed in fixing a brand on virtuous men whose only crime is free investigation; and religion becomes the most blighting tyranny which can establish itself over the mind. You have all heard of the outward evils which religion, when thus turned into tyranny, has inflicted; how it has dug dreary dungeons, kindled fires for the martyrs, and invented instruments of exquisite torture. But to me all this is less fearful than its influence over the mind. When I see the superstitions which it has fastened on the conscience, the spiritual terror with which it has haunted and subdued the ignorant and susceptible, the dark appalling views of God which it has spread far and wide, the dread of inquiry which it has struck into superior understandings, and the servility of spirit which it has made to pass for piety,—when I see all this, the fire, the scaffold, and the outward inquisition, terrible as they are, seem to me inferior evils. I look with a solemn joy on the heroic spirits who have met freely and fearlessly pain and death in the cause of truth and human rights. But there are other victims of intolerance on whom I look with unmixed sorrow. They are those who, spell-bound by early prejudice, or by intimidations from the pulpit and the press, dare not think; who anxiously stifle every doubt or misgiving in regard to their opinions, as if to doubt were a crime; who shrink from the seekers after truth as from infection; who deny all virtue which does not wear the livery of their own sect; who, surrendering to others their best powers, receive unresistingly a teaching which wars against reason and conscience; and who think it a merit to impose on such as live within their influence the grievous bondage which they bear themselves. How much, to be deplored, is it that religion, the very principle which is designed to raise men above the judgment and power

of man, should become the chief instrument of usurpation over the soul.

It is said that in this country, where the rights of private judgment, and of speaking and writing according to our convictions, are guaranteed with every solemnity by institutions and laws, religion can never degenerate into tyranny; that here its whole influence must conspire to the liberation and dignity of the mind? I answer, we discover little knowledge of human nature if we ascribe to constitutions the power of charming to sleep the spirit of intolerance and exclusion. Almost every other bad passion may sooner be put to rest; and for this plain reason, that intolerance always shelters itself under the name and garb of religious zeal. Because we live in a country where the gross, outward, visible chain is broken, we must not conclude that we are necessarily free. There are chains not made of iron, which eat more deeply into the soul. An espionage of bigotry may as effectually close our lips and chill our hearts as an armed and hundred-eyed police. There are countless ways by which men in a free country may encroach on their neighbour's rights. In religion, the instrument is ready made and always at hand. I refer to opinion combined and organised in sects and swayed by the clergy. We say we have no Inquisition. But a sect skilfully organised, trained to utter one cry, combined to cover with reproach whoever may differ from themselves, to drown the free expression of opinion by denunciations of heresy, and to strike terror into the multitude by joint and perpetual menace,—such a sect is as perilous and palsying to the intellect as the Inquisition. It serves the ministers as effectually as the sword. The present age is notoriously sectarian, and therefore hostile to liberty. One of the strongest features of our times is the tendency of men to run into associations, to lose themselves in masses, to think

and act in crowds, to act from the excitement of numbers, to sacrifice individuality, to identify themselves with parties and sects. At such a period we ought to fear—and cannot too much dread—lest a host should be marshalled under some sectarian standard, so numerous and so strong as to overawe opinion, stifle inquiry, compel dissenters to a prudent silence, and thus accomplish the end, without incurring the odium, of penal laws. We have indeed no small protection against this evil in the multiplicity of sects. But let us not forget that coalitions are as practicable and as perilous in church as in state; and that minor differences, as they are called, may be sunk for the purpose of joint exertion against a common foe. Happily, the spirit of this people, in spite of all narrowing influences, is essentially liberal. Here lies our safety. The liberal spirit of the people, I trust, is more and more to temper and curb that exclusive spirit which is the besetting sin of their religious guides.

I have spoken with great freedom of the sectarian and exclusive spirit of our age. I would earnestly recommend liberality of feeling and judgment towards men of different opinions. But, in so doing, I intend not to teach that opinions are of small moment, or that we should make no effort for spreading such as we deem the truth of God. I do mean, however, that we are to spread them by means which will not enslave ourselves to a party or bring others into bondage. We must respect alike our own and other's minds. We must not demand a uniformity in religion which exists nowhere else, but expect, and be willing, that the religious principle, like other principles of our nature, should manifest itself in different methods and degrees. Let us not forget that spiritual, like animal life, may subsist and grow under various forms. Whilst earnestly recommending what we deem the pure and primitive faith, let us remember that those who differ in word or

speculation may agree in heart; that the spirit of Christianity, though mixed and encumbered with error, is still divine; and that sects which assign different ranks to Jesus Christ, may still adore that godlike virtue which constituted him the glorious representative of his Father. Under the disguises of Papal and Protestant Creeds, let us learn to recognize the lovely aspect of Christianity, and rejoice to believe that, amidst dissonant forms and voices, the common Father discerns and accepts the same deep filial adoration. This is true freedom and enlargement of mind—a liberty which he who knows it would not barter for the widest dominion which priests and sects have usurped over the human soul.

FROM A LETTER ON CREEDS (1837).

My aversion to human creeds as bonds of Christian union, as conditions of Christian fellowship, as means of fastening chains on men's minds, constantly gains strength.

I cannot but look on human creeds with feelings approaching contempt. When I bring them into contrast with the New Testament, into what insignificance do they sink? What are they? Skeletons, freezing abstractions, metaphysical expressions of unintelligible dogmas; and these I am to regard as the expositions of the fresh, living, infinite truth which came from Jesus! I might with equal propriety be required to hear and receive the lisplings of infancy as the expressions of wisdom. Creeds are to the Scriptures what rush-lights are to the sun. The creed-maker defines Jesus in half-a-dozen lines, perhaps in metaphysical terms, and calls me to assent to this account of my Saviour. I learn less of Christ by this process than I should learn of the sun by being told that this glorious

luminary is a circle about a foot in diameter. There is but one way of knowing Christ. We must place ourselves near him, see him, hear him, follow him from his cross to the heavens, sympathize with him and obey him, and thus catch clear and bright glimpses of his divine glory.

Christian Truth is Infinite. Who can think of shutting it up in a few lines of an abstract creed? You might as well compress the boundless atmosphere, the fire, the all-pervading light, the free winds of the universe, into separate parcels, and weigh and label them, as break up Christianity into a few propositions. Christianity is freer, more illimitable, than the light or the winds. It is too mighty to be bound down by man's puny hands. It is a spirit rather than a rigid doctrine, the spirit of boundless love. The Infinite cannot be defined and measured out like a human manufacture. It cannot be reduced to a system. It cannot be comprehended in a set of precise ideas. It is to be felt rather than described.

It has been the fault of all sects that they have been too anxious to define their religion. They have laboured to circumscribe the infinite. Christianity, as it exists in the mind of the true disciple, is not made up of fragments, of separate ideas which he can express in detached propositions. It is a vast and ever-unfolding whole, pervaded by one spirit, each precept and doctrine deriving its vitality from its union with all. When I see this generous, heavenly doctrine compressed and cramped in human creeds, I feel as I should were I to see screws and chains applied to the countenance and limbs of a noble fellow-creature, deforming and destroying one of the most beautiful works of God,

II.
SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

‘WHATEVER doctrines may be assumed as the spiritual roots of morality, Jesus never passes judgment on a man on account of his speculative belief, but it is invariably *conduct* which calls forth his approval or his rebuke.’—JAMES DRUMMOND.

‘O BROTHER man! fold to thy heart thy brother;
Where pity dwells, the peace of God is there.
To worship rightly is to love each other—
Each smile a hymn, each kindly deed a prayer.’—
J. G. WHITTIER.

EDUCATION.¹

(1833)

WE are aware that there are some who take an attitude of defence when pressed with earnest applications on the subject of education. They think its importance overrated. They say that circumstances chiefly determine the young mind, that the influence of parents and teachers is very narrow, and that they sometimes dwarf and distort instead of improving the child, by taking the work out of the hand of nature. These remarks are not wholly unfounded. The power of parents is often exaggerated. To strengthen their sense of responsibility, they are often taught that they are competent to effects which are not within their reach, and are often discouraged by the greatness of the task to which they are summoned. Nothing is gained by exaggeration. It is true, and the truth need not be disguised, that parents cannot operate at pleasure on the minds and characters of the young. Their influence is limited by their own ignorance and imperfection, by the strength and freedom of the will of the child, and by its connection, from its birth, with other objects and beings. Parents are not the only educators of their offspring, but must divide the work with other and numerous agents. And in this we rejoice; for, were the young confined to domestic influences, each generation would be a copy of the preceding, and the progress of society would cease. The child is not put into the

¹ Selections from an Essay published in the *Christian Examiner*, November, 1833.

hands of parents alone. It is not born to hear but a few voices. It is brought at birth into a vast, we may say an infinite, school. The universe is charged with the office of its education. Innumerable voices come to it from all that it meets, sees, feels. It is not confined to a few books anxiously selected for it by parental care. Nature, society, experience, are volumes opened everywhere and perpetually before its eyes. It takes lessons from every object within the sphere of its senses and its activity, from the sun and stars; from the flowers of spring and the fruits of autumn, from every associate, from every smiling and frowning countenance, from the pursuits, trades, professions of the community, in which it moves, from its plays, friendships, and dislikes, from the varieties of human character, and from the consequences of its actions. All these, and more than these, are appointed to teach, awaken, develop the mind of the child. It is plunged amidst friendly and hostile influences, to grow by co-operating with the first, and by resisting the last. The circumstances in which we are placed form, indeed, a most important school, and by their help some men have risen to distinction in knowledge and virtue, with little aid from parents, teachers, and books.

Still, the influence of parents and teachers is great. On them it very much depends whether the circumstances which surround the child shall operate to his good. They must help him to read, interpret, and use wisely the great volumes of nature, society, and experience. They must fix his volatile glance, arrest his precipitate judgment, guide his observation, teach him to link together cause and effect in the outward world, and turn his thoughts inward on his own more mysterious nature. The young, left to the education of circumstances—left without teaching, guidance, restraint—will, in all probability, grow up ignorant, torpid in intellect, strangers to their own powers, and slaves to

their passions. The fact that some children, without aid from parents or schools, have struggled into eminence, no more proves such aid to be useless, than the fact that some have grown strong under physical exposures which would destroy the majority of the race, would prove the worthlessness of the ordinary precautions which are taken for the security of health.

We have spoken of parents as possessing, and as bound to exert, an important influence on the young. But they cannot do the whole work of education. Their daily occupation, the necessity of labours for the support of their families, household cares, the duty of watching over the health of their children, and other social relations, render it almost impossible for parents to qualify themselves for much of the teaching which the young require, and often deny them time and opportunity for giving instruction to which they are competent. Hence the need of a class of persons who shall devote themselves exclusively to the work of education. In all societies, ancient and modern, this want has been felt; the profession of teachers has been known; and to secure the best helps of this kind to children is one of the first duties of parents, for on these the progress of their children very much depends.

One of the discouraging views of society at the present moment is, that whilst much is said of education, hardly any seem to feel the necessity of securing to it the best minds in the community, and of securing them at any price. A juster estimate of this office begins to be made in our great cities: but, generally, it seems to be thought that anybody may become a teacher. The most moderate ability is thought to be competent to the most important profession in society. Strange, too, as it may seem, on this point parents incline to be economical. They who squander thousands on dress, furniture, amusements, think it hard to pay comparatively small sums to the instructor; and through

this ruinous economy, and this ignorance of the dignity of a teacher's vocation, they rob their children of aid for which the treasures of worlds can afford no compensation.

There is no office higher than that of a teacher of youth, for there is nothing on earth so precious as the mind, soul, character of the child. No office should be regarded with greater respect. The first minds in the community should be encouraged to assume it. Parents should do all but impoverish themselves to induce such to become the guardians and guides of their children. To this good, all their show and luxury should be sacrificed. Here they should be lavish, whilst they straiten themselves in everything else. They should wear the cheapest clothes, live on the plainest food, if they can in no other way secure to their families the best instruction. They should have no anxiety to accumulate property for their children, provided they can place them under influences which will awaken their faculties, inspire them with pure and high principles, and fit them to bear a manly, useful, and honourable part in the world. No language can express the cruelty or folly of that economy which, to leave a fortune to a child, starves his intellect, impoverishes his heart. There should be no economy in education. Money should never be weighed against the soul of a child. It should be poured out like water for the child's intellectual and moral life.

Parents should seek an educator for the young of their families who will become to them a hearty and efficient friend, counsellor, coadjutor, in their work. If their circumstances will allow it, they should so limit the school that the instructor may know intimately every child, may become the friend of each, and may converse frequently with them in regard to each. He should be worthy of their confidence, should find their doors always open, should be among their most welcome

guests and should study with them the discipline which the peculiarities of each pupil may require. He should give the parents warning of the least obliquity of mind which he discovers at school, should receive in return their suggestions as to the injudiciousness of his own methods in regard to one or another child, and should concert with them the means of arresting every evil at its first manifestation. Such is the teacher we need, and his value cannot be paid in gold. A man of distinguished ability and virtue, whose mind should be concentrated in the work of training as many children as he can thoroughly understand and guide, would shed a light on the path of parents for which they often sigh, and would give an impulse to the young little comprehended under our present modes of teaching. No profession should receive so liberal remuneration. We need not say how far the community fall short of this estimate of the teacher's office. Very many send their children to school, and seldom or never see the instructor who is operating daily and deeply on their minds and characters. With a blind confidence, perhaps they do not ask how that work is advancing on which the dearest interests of the family depend. Perhaps they put the children under the daily control of one with whom they do not care to associate. Perhaps, were they told what they ought to pay for teaching, they would stare as if a project for robbing them were on foot, or would suspect the sanity of the friend who should counsel them to throw away so much money in purchasing that cheapest of all articles, that drug in every market, instruction for their children.

We know not how society can be aided more than by the formation of a body of wise and efficient educators. We know not any class which would contribute so much to the stability of the state, and to domestic happiness. Much as we respect the ministry of the Gospel, we believe that it must yield

in importance to the office of training the young. In truth, the ministry now accomplishes little for want of that early intellectual and moral discipline by which alone a community can be prepared to distinguish truth from falsehood, to comprehend the instructions of the pulpit, to receive higher and broader views of duty, and to apply general principles to the diversified details of life. A body of cultivated men, devoted, with their whole hearts, to the improvement of education, and to the most effectual training of the young, would work a fundamental revolution in society. They would leaven the community with just principles. Their influence would penetrate our families. Our domestic discipline would no longer be left to accident and impulse. What parent has not felt the need of this aid, has not often been depressed, heart-sick, under the consciousness of ignorance in the great work of swaying the youthful mind !

We have spoken of the office of the education of human beings as the noblest on earth, and have spoken deliberately. It is more important than that of the statesman. The statesman may set fences round our property and dwellings ; but how much more are we indebted to him who calls forth the powers and affections of those for whom our property is earned, and our dwellings are reared, and who renders our children objects of increasing love and respect ? We go farther. We maintain that higher ability is required for the office of an educator of the young than for that of a statesman. The highest ability is that which penetrates farthest into human nature, comprehends the mind in all its capacities, traces out the laws of thought and moral action, understands the perfection of human nature and how it may be approached, understands the springs, motives, applications, by which the child is to be roused to the most vigorous and harmonious action of all its faculties, understands its perils, and

knows how to blend and modify the influences which outward circumstances exert on the youthful mind. The speculations of statesmen are shallow compared with these. It is the chief function of the statesman to watch over the outward interests of a people; that of the educator to quicken its soul. The statesman must study and manage the passions and prejudices of the community; the educator must study the essential, the deepest, the loftiest principles of human nature. The statesman works with coarse instruments for coarse ends; the educator is to work by the most refined influences on that delicate ethereal essence, the immortal soul.

Nothing is more common than mistakes as to the comparative importance of the different vocations of life. Noisy, showy agency, which is spread over a great surface, and therefore seldom penetrates beneath the surface, is called glory. Multitudes are blinded by official dignity, and stand wondering at a pigmy, because he happens to be perched on some eminence in church or state. So the declaimer, who can electrify a crowd by passionate appeals, or splendid images, which give no clear perceptions to the intellect, which develop no general truth, which breathe no firm disinterested purpose, passes for a great man. How few reflect that the greater man is he who, without noise or show, is wisely fixing in a few minds broad, pregnant, generous principles of judgment and action, and giving an impulse which will carry them on for ever! Jesus, with that divine wisdom which separates him from all other teachers, declared that the first requisite for becoming 'great in his kingdom,' which was another phrase for exerting a great moral influence, was Humility; by which he meant a spirit opposed to that passion for conspicuous station with which he saw his disciples inflamed—a spirit of deep, unpretending philanthropy, manifested in sympathy with the wants

of the mind, and in condescension to any efforts by which the ignorant and tempted might be brought to truth and virtue. According to these views, we think it a greater work to educate a child, in the true and large sense of that phrase, than to rule a state.

Perhaps the direction which benevolence is taking at the present day has some influence in turning from the office of education the high honour which is its due. Benevolence is now directing itself very much to public objects, to the alleviation of misery on a grand scale, to the conversion of whole nations, to the instruction of large bodies, and in this form it draws the chief notice and admiration of multitudes. Now, we are far from wishing to confine this action of charity. We respect it, and recognize in it one of the distinctive fruits of Christianity. But it must not be forgotten that the purest benevolence is that which acts on individuals, and is manifested in our particular social domestic relations. It requires no great improvement in charity to sympathize with the degradation and misery into which the millions of India are sunk by the worship of Juggernaut, and other superstitions. It is a higher action of the intellect and heart to study and understand thoroughly the character of an individual who is near us, to enter into his mind, to trace his defects and sufferings to their true springs, to bear quietly and gently with his frowardness and relapses, and apply to him patiently and encouragingly the means of intellectual and moral elevation. It is not the highest attainment to be benevolent to those who are thousands or miles from us, whose miseries make striking pictures for the imagination, who never cross our paths, never interfere with our interests, never try us by their waywardness, never shock us by their coarse manners, and whom we are to assist by an act of bounty which sends a missionary to their aid. The truest mode of enlarging our benevolence is not to

quicken our sensibility towards great masses or wide-spread evils, but to approach, comprehend, sympathize with, and act upon, a continually increasing number of individuals. It is the glory of God to know, love, and act on every individual in his infinite creation. Let us, if we can, do good far and wide. Let us send light and joy, if we can, to the ends of the earth. The charity which is now active for distant objects is noble. We only wish to say that it ranks behind the obscurer philanthropy which, while it sympathizes with the race, enters deeply into the minds, wants, interests, of the individuals within its reach, and devotes itself patiently and wisely to the task of bringing them to a higher standard of intellectual and moral worth.

We would suggest it to those who are anxious to do good on a grand and imposing scale, that *they* should be the last to cast into the shade the labours of the retired teacher of the young; because education is the germ of all other improvements, and because all their schemes for the progress of society must fail without it. How often have the efforts of the philanthropist been foiled by the prejudices and brutal ignorance of the community which he has hoped to serve, by their incapacity of understanding him, of entering into and co-operating with his views! He has cast his seed on the barren sand, and of course reaped no fruit but disappointment. Philanthropists are too apt to imagine that they can accomplish particular reformatations, or work particular changes in a society, although no foundation for these improvements has been laid in its intellectual and moral culture. They expect a people to think and act wisely in special cases, although generally wanting in intelligence, sound judgment, and the capacity of understanding and applying the principles of reason. But this partial improvement is a vain hope. The physician who should spend his skill on a diseased limb whilst all the functions were

deranged and the principle of life almost extinguished, would get no credit for skill. To do men permanent good, we must act on their whole nature, and especially must aid, foster, and guide their highest faculties, at the first period of their development. If left in early life to sink into intellectual and moral torpor—if suffered to grow up unconscious of their powers, unused to steady and wise exertion of the understanding, and strangers to the motives which ought to stir and guide human activity—they will be poor subjects for the efforts of the philanthropist. Benevolence is short-sighted, indeed, and must blame itself for failure, if it do not see in education the chief interest of the human race.

One great cause of the low estimation in which the teacher is now held, may be found in narrow views of education. The multitude think, that to educate a child, is to crowd into its mind a given amount of knowledge, to teach the mechanism of reading and writing, to load the memory with words, to prepare a boy for the routine of a trade. No wonder, then, that they think almost everybody fit to teach. The true end of education, as we have again and again suggested, is to unfold and direct aright our whole nature. Its office is to call forth Power of every kind, power of thought, affection, will, and outward action; power to observe, to reason, to judge, to contrive; power to adopt good ends firmly, and to pursue them efficiently; power to govern ourselves, and to influence others; power to gain and to spread happiness. Reading is but an instrument; education is to teach its best use. The intellect was created, not to receive passively a few words, dates, facts, but to be active for the acquisition of Truth. Accordingly, education should labour to inspire a profound love of truth, and to teach the processes of investigation. A sound logic, by which we mean the science or art which instructs us in the laws

of reasoning and evidence, in the true methods of inquiry, and in the sources of false judgments, is an essential part of a good education. And yet how little is done to teach the right use of the intellect in the common modes of training either rich or poor! As a general rule, the young are to be made, as far as possible, their own teachers, the discoverers of truth, the interpreters of nature, the framers of science. They are to be helped to help themselves. They should be taught to observe and study the world in which they live, to trace the connections of events, to rise from particular facts to general principles, and then to apply these in explaining new phenomena. Such is a rapid outline of the intellectual education which, as far as possible, should be given to all human beings; and with this moral education should go hand in hand. In proportion as the child gains knowledge, he should be taught how to use it well, how to turn it to the good of mankind. He should study the world as God's world, and as the sphere in which he is to form interesting connections with his fellow-creatures. A spirit of humanity should be breathed into him from all his studies. In teaching geography, the physical and moral condition, the wants, advantages, and striking peculiarities of different nations, and the relations of climates, seas, rivers, mountains, to their characters and pursuits, should be pointed out, so as to awaken an interest in man wherever he dwells. History should be constantly used to exercise the moral judgment of the young, to call forth sympathy with the fortunes of the human race, and to expose to indignation and abhorrence that selfish ambition, that passion for dominion, which has so long deluged the earth with blood and woe. And not only should the excitement of just moral feeling be proposed in every study. The science of morals should form an important branch of every child's instruction. One branch of ethics should be

particularly insisted on by the government. Every school, established by law, should be specially bound to teach the duties of the citizen to the state, to unfold the principles of free institutions, and to train the young to an enlightened patriotism. From these brief and imperfect views of the nature and ends of a wise education, we learn the dignity of the profession to which it is entrusted, and the importance of securing to it the best minds of the community.

On reviewing these hints on the extent of education, we see that one important topic has been omitted. We have said that it is the office of the teacher to call into vigorous action the mind of the child. He must do more. He must strive to create a thirst, an insatiable craving, for knowledge—to give animation to study and make it a pleasure, and thus to communicate an impulse which will endure when the instructions of the school are closed. The mark of a good teacher is, not only that he produces great effort in his pupils, but that he dismisses them from his care conscious of having only laid the foundation of knowledge, and anxious and resolved to improve themselves. One of the sure signs of the low state of instruction among us is, that the young, on leaving school, feel as if the work of intellectual culture were done, and give up steady vigorous effort for higher truth and wider knowledge. Our daughters at sixteen and our sons at eighteen or twenty have *finished* their education. The true use of a school is, to enable and dispose the pupil to learn through life; and if so, who does not see that the office of teacher requires men of enlarged and liberal minds, and of winning manners—in other words, that it requires as cultivated men as can be found in society? If to drive and to drill were the chief duties of an instructor—if to force into the mind an amount of lifeless knowledge, to make the child a machine, to create a repugnance to books, to mental labour, to the acquisition of knowledge

—were the great objects of the school-room, then the teacher might be chosen on the principles which now govern the school committees in no small part of our country. Then the man who can read, write, cipher, and whip, and will exercise his gifts at the lowest price, deserves the precedence which he now too often enjoys. But if the human being be something more than a block or a brute—if he have powers which proclaim him a child of God, and which were given for noble action and perpetual progress—then a better order of things should begin among us, and truly enlightened men should be summoned to the work of education.

Leaving the subject of instruction, we observe that there is another duty of teachers which requires that they should be taken from the class of improved, wise, virtuous men. They are to govern as well as teach. They must preserve order, and for this end must inflict punishment in some of its forms. We know that some philanthropists wish to banish all punishment from the school. We would not discourage their efforts and hopes; but we fear that the time for this reform is not yet come, and that as long as the want of a wise discipline at home supplies the teacher with so many lawless subjects, he will be compelled to use other restraints than kindness and reason. Punishment, we fear, cannot be dispensed with; but that it ought to be administered most deliberately, righteously, judiciously, and with a wise adaptation to the character of the child, we all feel; and can it then be safely entrusted, as is too much the case, to teachers undisciplined in mind and heart? Corporal punishment at present has a place in almost all our schools for boys, and perhaps in some for girls. It may be necessary. But ought not every parent to have some security that his child shall not receive a blow unless inflicted in wisdom, justice, and kindness? And what security can he have for this but in the improved character of the instructor? We

have known mournful effects of injudicious corporal punishment. We have known a blow to alienate a child from his father, to stir up bitter hatred towards his teacher, and to indispose him to study and the pursuit of knowledge. We cannot be too unwilling to place our children under the care of passionate teachers, who, having no rule over their own spirits, cannot of course rule others, or of weak and unskilful teachers, who are obliged to supply by severity the want of a wise firmness. It is wonderful how thoughtlessly parents expose their children to corporal punishment. Our laws have expunged whipping from the penal code, and the felon is exempted from this indignity. But how many boys are subjected to a whipper in the shape of a school-master, whose whole mystery of discipline lies in the ferule. The discipline of a school is of vast importance in its moral influence. A boy compelled for six hours each day to see the countenance and hear the voice of an unfeeling, petulant, passionate, unjust teacher, is placed in a school of vice. He is all the time learning lessons of inhumanity, hardheartedness, and injustice. The English are considered by the rest of Europe as inclined to cruelty. Their common people are said to be wanting in mercy to the inferior animals and to be ferocious in their quarrels; and their planters enjoy the bad pre-eminence of being the worst masters in the West Indies, with the exception of the Dutch. It is worth consideration, whether these vices, if they really exist, may not be ascribed in part to the unrestrained, barbarous use of whipping in their schools. Of one thing we are sure, that the discipline of a school has an important influence on the character of a child; and that a just, mild, benevolent teacher, who procures order by methods which the moral sense of his pupils approves, is perpetually spreading around him his own virtues. Should not our teachers, then, be sought from the class of the most enlightened and excellent men?

Our limits allow us to add but one more remark on the qualifications of teachers. It is important that they should be able to co-operate with parents in awakening the religious principle in the young. We would not, of course, admit into schools the peculiarities of the denominations which divide the Christian world. But religion in its broadest sense should be taught. It should indirectly mix with all teaching. The young mind should be guided through nature and human history to the Creator and Disposer of the universe; and, still more, the practical principles and spirit of Christianity should be matters of direct inculcation. We know no office requiring greater wisdom; and none but the wise and good should be invited to discharge it.

We know that it will be objected to the views now given, that few, very few, will be able to pay for such teachers as we recommend. We believe, however, that there is a large class who, if they had the will, and would deny themselves as they ought, might procure excellent instructors for their children; and as for the rest, let them do their best, let them but throw their hearts into this cause, and improvements will be effected which have not been anticipated, perhaps not conceived. We acknowledge, however, that our remarks have been intended chiefly for the opulent. Let an interest in education be awakened in this class, and let more generous means for its promotion be employed, and we are satisfied that the teaching of all classes will be advanced, the talent of the country will be more and more directed to the office of instruction, and the benefit will spread through the whole community.

[The sixty and more years that have elapsed since Dr. Channing wrote his Essay have witnessed a revolution in popular education in America and in England.]

SLAVERY.

(1835)

THE first question to be proposed by a rational being is not what is profitable, but what is right. Duty must be primary, prominent, most conspicuous among the objects of human thought and pursuit. If we cast it down from its supremacy, if we inquire first for our interests and then for our duties, we shall certainly err. We can never see the right clearly and fully but by making it our first concern. No judgment can be just or wise but that which is built on the conviction of the paramount worth and importance of duty. This is the fundamental truth, the supreme law of reason; and the mind which does not start from this, in its inquiries into human affairs, is doomed to great, perhaps fatal error.

The right is the supreme good, and includes all other goods. In seeking and adhering to it we secure our true and only happiness. All prosperity not founded on it is built on sand. If human affairs are controlled, as we believe, by Almighty Rectitude and Impartial Goodness, then to hope for happiness from wrong-doing is as insane as to seek health and prosperity by rebelling against the laws of nature, by sowing our seed on the ocean, or making poison our common food. There is but one unfailing good; and that is, fidelity to the Everlasting Law written on the heart, and rewritten and republished in God's Word.

Whoever places this faith in the everlasting law of rectitude must, of course, regard the question of slavery first and chiefly as a moral question. All other considerations will weigh little with him, compared with its moral character and moral influences. The following remarks, therefore, are designed to aid the reader in forming a just moral judgment of slavery. Great truths, inalienable rights, everlasting duties, these will form the chief subjects of this discussion. There are times when the assertion of great principles is the best service a man can render society. The present is a moment of bewildering excitement, when men's minds are stormed and darkened by strong passions and fierce conflicts; and also a moment of absorbing worldliness, when the moral law is made to bow to expediency, and its high and strict requirements are denied, or dismissed as metaphysical abstractions or impracticable theories. At such a season, to utter great principles without passion, and in the spirit of unfeigned and universal goodwill, and to engrave them deeply and durably on men's minds, is to do more for the world than to open mines of wealth, or to frame the most successful schemes of policy.

Of late our country has been convulsed by the question of slavery; and the people, in proportion as they have felt vehemently, have thought superficially, or hardly thought at all; and we see the results in a singular want of well-defined principles, in a strange vagueness and inconsistency of opinion, and in the proneness to excess which belongs to unsettled minds. The multitude have been called, now to contemplate the horrors of slavery, and now to shudder at the ruin and bloodshed which must follow emancipation. The word *Massacre* has resounded through the land, striking terror into strong as well as tender hearts, and awakening indignation against whatever may seem to threaten such a consummation. The consequence is, that not a

few dread all discussion on the subject, and, if not reconciled to the continuance of slavery, at least believe they have no duty to perform, no testimony to bear, no influence to exert, no sentiments to cherish and spread, in relation to this evil. What is still worse, opinions either favouring or extenuating it are heard with little or no disapprobation. Concessions are made to it which would once have shocked the community; whilst to assail it is pronounced unwise and perilous. No stronger reason for a calm exposition of its true character can be given than this very state of the public mind. A community can suffer no greater calamity than the loss of its principles. Lofty and pure sentiment is the life and hope of a people. There was never such an obligation to discuss slavery as at this moment, when recent events have done much to unsettle and obscure men's minds in regard to it. This result is to be ascribed in part to the injudicious vehemence of those who have taken into their hands the cause of the slave. Such ought to remember, that to espouse a good cause is not enough. We must maintain it in a spirit answering to its dignity. Let no man touch the great interests of humanity who does not strive to sanctify himself for the work by cleansing his heart of all wrath and uncharitableness, who cannot hope that he is in a measure baptised into the spirit of universal love. Even sympathy with the injured and oppressed may do harm, by being partial, exclusive, and bitterly indignant. How far the declension of the spirit of freedom is to be ascribed to the cause now suggested, I do not say. The effect is plain, and whoever sees and laments the evil should strive to arrest it.

Slavery ought to be discussed. We ought to think, feel, speak, and write about it. But whatever we do in regard to it should be done with a deep feeling of responsibility, and so done as not to put in jeopardy the peace of the Slave-holding States. On this point

public opinion has not been and cannot be too strongly pronounced. Slavery, indeed, from its very nature, must be a ground of alarm wherever it exists. Slavery and security can by no device be joined together. But we may not, must not, by rashness and passion increase the peril. To instigate the slave to insurrection is a crime for which no rebuke and no punishment can be too severe. This would be to involve slave and master in common ruin. It is not enough to say that the Constitution is violated by any action endangering the slaveholding portion of our country. A higher law than the Constitution forbids this unholy interference. Were our national union dissolved, we ought to reprobate, as sternly as we now do, the slightest manifestation of a disposition to stir up a servile war. Still more, were the Free and Slave-holding States not only separated, but, engaged in the fiercest hostilities, the former would deserve the abhorrence of the world and the indignation of Heaven, were they to resort to insurrection and massacre as means of victory. Better were it for us to bare our own breasts to the knife of the slave, than to arm him with it against his master.

It is not by personal, direct action on the mind of the slave that we can do him good. Our concern is with the free. With the free we are to plead his cause. And this is peculiarly our duty, because we have bound ourselves to resist his own efforts for his emancipation. We suffer him to do nothing for himself. The more, then, should be done for him. Our physical power is pledged against him in case of revolt. Then our moral power should be exerted for his relief. His weakness, which we increase, gives him a claim to the only aid we can afford, to our moral sympathy, to the free and faithful exposition of his wrongs. As men, as Christians, as citizens, we have duties to the slave, as well as to every other member of the community. On this point we have no liberty. The eternal law

binds us to take the side of the injured ; and this law is peculiarly obligatory when we forbid him to lift an arm in his own defence.

Let it not be said we can do nothing for the slave. We can do much. We have a power mightier than armies—the power of truth, of principle, of virtue, of right, of religion, of love. We have a power which is growing with every advance of civilization, before which the slave-trade has fallen, which is mitigating the sternest despotisms, which is spreading education through all ranks of society, which is bearing Christianity to the ends of the earth, which carries in itself the pledge of destruction to every institution which debases humanity. Who can measure the power of Christian philanthropy, of enlightened goodness, pouring itself forth in prayers and persuasions, from the press and pulpit, from the lips and hearts of devoted men, and more and more binding together the wise and good in the cause of their race ? All other powers may fail. This must triumph. It is leagued with God's omnipotence. It is God Himself acting in the hearts of his children. It has an ally in every conscience, in every human breast, in the wrong-doer himself. This spirit has but begun its work on earth. It is breathing itself more and more through literature, education, institutions, and opinion. Slavery cannot stand before it. Great moral principles, pure and generous sentiments, cannot be confined to this or that spot. They cannot be shut out by territorial lines or local legislation. They are divine inspirations, and partake of the omnipresence of their Author. The deliberate, solemn conviction of good men through the world, that slavery is a grievous wrong to human nature, will make itself felt. To increase this moral power is every man's duty. To embody and express this great truth is in every man's power ; and thus every man can do something to break the chain of the slave.

There are not a few persons who, from vulgar modes of thinking, cannot be interested in this subject. Because the slave is a degraded being, they think slavery a low topic, and wonder how it can excite the attention and sympathy of those who can discuss or feel for anything else. Now the truth is that slavery, regarded only in a philosophical light, is a theme worthy of the highest minds. It involves the gravest questions about human nature and society. It carries us into the problems which have exercised for ages the highest understandings. It calls us to inquire into the foundation, nature and extent of human rights, into the distinction between a person and a thing, into the true relations of man to man, into the obligations of the community to each of its members, into the ground and laws of property, and, above all, into the true dignity and indestructible claims of a moral being. I venture to say there is no subject now agitated by the community which can compare in philosophical dignity with slavery; and yet to multitudes the question falls under the same contempt with the slave himself. To many, a writer seems to lower himself who touches it. The falsely refined, who want intellectual force to grasp it, pronounce it unworthy of their notice.

But this subject has more than philosophical dignity. It has an important bearing on character. Our interest in it is one test by which our comprehension of the distinctive spirit of Christianity must be judged. Christianity is the manifestation and inculcation of Universal Love. The great teaching of Christianity is, that we must recognize and respect human nature in all its forms in the poorest, most ignorant, most fallen. We must look beneath 'the flesh' to 'the spirit.' The spiritual principle in man is what entitles him to our brotherly regard. To be just to this is the great injunction of our religion. To overlook this, on account of condition or colour, is to violate the great Christian

law. We have reason to think that it is one design of God, in appointing the vast diversities of human condition, to put to the test, and to bring out most distinctly, the principle of spiritual love. It is wisely ordered that human nature is not set before us in a few forms of beauty, magnificence, and outward glory. To be dazzled and attracted by these would be no sign of reverence for what is interior and spiritual in human nature. To lead us to discern and love this, we are brought into connection with fellow-creatures whose outward circumstances are repulsive. To recognize our own spiritual nature and God's image in these humble forms, to recognize as brethren those who want all outward distinctions, is the chief way in which we are to manifest the spirit of Him who came to raise the fallen and to save the lost. We see, then, the moral importance of the question of slavery. According to our decision of it, we determine our comprehension of the Christian law. He who cannot see a brother, a child of God, a man possessing all the rights of humanity, under a skin darker than his own, wants the vision of a Christian. He worships the Outward. The spirit is not yet revealed to him. To look unmoved on the degradation and wrongs of a fellow-creature, because burned by a fiercer sun, proves us strangers to justice and love in those universal forms which characterize Christianity. The greatest of all distinctions, the only enduring one, is moral goodness, virtue, religion. Outward distinctions cannot add to the dignity of this. The wealth of worlds is 'not sufficient for a burnt-offering' on its altar. A being capable of this is invested by God with solemn claims on his fellow-creatures. To exclude millions of such beings from our sympathy, because of outward disadvantages, proves that, in whatever else we surpass them, we are not their superiors in Christian virtue.

The spirit of Christianity, I have said, is distin-

guished by Universality. It is universal justice. It respects all the rights of all beings. It suffers no being, however obscure, to be wronged, without condemning the wrong-doer. Impartial, uncompromising, fearless, it screens no favourites, is dazzled by no power, spreads its shield over the weakest, summons the mightiest to its bar, and speaks to the conscience in tones under which the mightiest have quailed. It is also universal love, comprehending those that are near and those that are far off, the high and the low, the rich and poor, descending to the fallen, and especially binding itself to those in whom human nature is trampled under foot. Such is the spirit of Christianity; and nothing but the illumination of this spirit can prepare us to pass judgment on slavery.

These remarks are intended to show the spirit in which slavery ought to be approached, and the point of view from which it will be regarded in the present discussion. My plan may be briefly sketched:—

(1.) I shall show that man cannot be justly held and used as Property.

(2.) I shall show that man has sacred rights, the gifts of God, and inseparable from human nature, of which slavery is the infraction.

(3.) I shall offer some explanations, to prevent misapplication of these principles.

(4.) I shall unfold the evils of slavery.

(5.) I shall consider the argument which the Scriptures are thought to furnish in favour of slavery.

(6.) I shall offer some remarks on the means of removing it.

(7.) I shall offer some remarks on abolitionism.

(8.) I shall conclude with a few reflections on the duties belonging to the times.¹

¹ The first chapter or section is alone given in this volume, as containing an outline of the principles and chief arguments advanced by Dr. Channing against slavery.

THE SLAVE AS PROPERTY.

The slave-holder claims the slave as his Property. The very idea of a slave is, that he belongs to another, that he is bound to live and labour for another, to be another's instrument, and to make another's will his habitual law, however adverse to his own. Another owns him, and of course has a right to his time and strength, a right to the fruits of his labour, a right to task him without his consent, and to determine the kind and duration of his toil, a right to confine him to any bounds, a right to extort the required work by stripes, a right, in a word, to use him as a tool, without contract, against his will, and in denial of his right to dispose of himself, or to use his power for his own good. 'A slave,' says the Louisiana code, 'is in the power of the master to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry, his labour; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire anything, but which must belong to his master.' 'Slaves shall be deemed, taken, reputed, and adjudged,' say the South Carolina laws, 'to be chattels personal in the hands of their masters, and possessions to all intents and purposes whatsoever.' Such is slavery—a claim to man as property.

Now this claim of property in a human being is altogether false, groundless. No such right of man in man can exist. A human being cannot be justly owned. To hold and treat him as property is to inflict a great wrong—to incur the guilt of oppression.

This position there is a difficulty in maintaining, on account of its exceeding obviousness. It is too plain for proof. To defend it is like trying to confirm a self-evident truth. To find arguments is not easy, because an argument is something clearer than the proposition to be sustained. The man who, on hearing the claim to property in man, does not see and feel distinctly that it

is a cruel usurpation, is hardly to be reached by reasoning, for it is hard to find any plainer principles than what he begins with denying. I will endeavour, however, to illustrate the truth which I have stated.

(1.) It is plain that if one man may be held as property, then every other man may be so held. If there be nothing in human nature, in our common nature, which excludes and forbids the conversion of him who possesses it into an article of property; if the right of the free to liberty is founded, not on their essential attributes as rational and moral beings, but on certain adventitious, accidental circumstances into which they have been thrown; then every human being, by a change of circumstances, may justly be held and treated by another as property. If one man may be rightfully reduced to slavery, then there is not a human being on whom the same chain may not be imposed. Now, let every reader ask himself this plain question: Could I, can I, be rightfully seized and made an article of property; be made a passive instrument of another's will and pleasure; be subjected to another's irresponsible power; be subjected to stripes at another's will; be denied the control and use of my own limbs and faculties for my own good? Does any man, so questioned, doubt, waver, look about him for an answer? Is not the reply given immediately, intuitively, by his whole inward being? Does not an unhesitating, unerring conviction spring up in my breast, that no other man can acquire such a right in myself? Do we not repel, indignantly and with horror, the thought of being reduced to the condition of tools and chattels to a fellow-creature? Is there any moral truth more deeply rooted in us, than that such a degradation would be an infinite wrong? And, if this impression be a delusion, on what single moral conviction can we rely? This deep assurance, that we cannot be rightfully made another's property, does not rest on the hue of our skins

or the place of our birth, or our strength, or wealth. These things do not enter our thoughts. The consciousness of indestructible rights is a part of our moral being, the consciousness of our humanity involves the persuasion that we cannot be owned as a tree or a brute. As men, we cannot justly be made slaves. Then no man can be rightfully enslaved. In casting the yoke from ourselves as an unspeakable wrong, we condemn ourselves as wrong-doers and oppressors in laying it on any who share our nature.—It is not necessary to inquire whether a man, by extreme guilt, may not forfeit the rights of his nature, and be justly punished with slavery. On this point crude notions prevail. But the discussion would be foreign to the present subject. We are now not speaking of criminals. We speak of innocent men, who have given us no hold on them by guilt; and our own consciousness is a proof that such cannot rightfully be seized as property by a fellow-creature.

(2.) A man cannot be seized and held as property, because he has Rights. What these rights are, whether few or many, or whether all men have the same, are questions for future discussion. All that is assumed now is, that every human being has *some* rights. This truth cannot be denied, but by denying to a portion of the race that moral nature which is the sure and only foundation of rights. This truth has never, I believe, been disputed. It is even recognized in the very codes of slave legislation, which, while they strip a man of liberty, affirm his right to life and threaten his murderer with punishment. Now, I say, a being having rights cannot justly be made property; for this claim over him virtually annuls all his rights. It strips him of all power to assert them. It makes it a crime to assert them. The very essence of slavery is, to put a man defenceless into the hands of another. The right claimed by the master, to task, to force, to imprison, to whip, and to punish the slave, at discretion, and

especially to prevent the least resistance to his will, is a virtual denial and subversion of all the rights of the victim of his power. The two cannot stand together. Can we doubt which of them ought to fall?

(3.) Another argument against property is to be found in the Essential Equality of men. I know that this doctrine, so venerable in the eyes of our fathers, has lately been denied. Verbal logicians have told us that men are 'born equal' only in the sense of being equally born. They have asked whether all are equally tall, strong, or beautiful; or whether Nature, Procrustes-like, reduces all her children to one standard of intellect and virtue. By such arguments it is attempted to set aside the principle of equality, on which the soundest moralists have reared the structure of social duty; and in these ways the old foundations of despotic power, which our fathers in their simplicity thought they had subverted, are laid again by their sons.

It is freely granted that there are innumerable diversities among men; but be it remembered, they are ordained to bind men together, and not to subdue one to the other; ordained to give means and occasions of mutual aid, and to carry forward each and all, so that the good of all is equally intended in this distribution of various gifts. Be it also remembered, that these diversities among men are as nothing in comparison with the attributes in which they agree; and it is this which constitutes their essential equality. All men have the same rational nature and the same power of conscience, and all are equally made for indefinite improvement of these divine faculties, and for the happiness to be found in their virtuous use. Who, that comprehends these gifts, does not see that the diversities of the race vanish before them? Let it be added, that the natural advantages which distinguish one man from another are so bestowed as to counterbalance one another, and bestowed without regard to rank or con-

dition in life. Whoever surpasses in one endowment is inferior in others. Even genius, the greatest gift, is found in union with strange infirmities, and often places its possessors below ordinary men in the conduct of life. Great learning is often put to shame by the mother-wit and keen good sense of uneducated men. Nature, indeed, pays no heed to birth or condition in bestowing her favours. The noblest spirits sometimes grow up in the obscurest spheres. Thus equal are men; and among these equals, who can substantiate his claim to make others his property, his tools, the mere instruments of his private interest and gratification? Let this claim begin, and where will it stop? If one may assert it, why not all? Among these partakers of the same rational and moral nature, who can make good a right over others, which others may not establish over himself? Does he insist on superior strength of body or mind? Who of us has no superior in one or the other of these endowments? Is it sure that the slave or the slave's child may not surpass his master in intellectual energy, or in moral worth? Has nature conferred distinctions which tell us plainly who shall be owners and who be owned? Who of us can unblushingly lift his head and say that God has written 'Master' there? or who can show the word 'Slave' engraven on his brother's brow? The equality of nature makes slavery a wrong. Nature's seal is affixed to no instrument by which property in a single human being is conveyed.

(4.) That a human being cannot be justly held and used as property, is apparent from the very nature of property. Property is an exclusive right. It shuts out all claim but that of the possessor. What one man owns cannot belong to another. What, then, is the consequence of holding a human being as property? Plainly this. He can have no right to himself. His limbs are, in truth, not morally his own. He has not a

right to his own strength. It belongs to another. His will, intellect, and muscles, all the powers of body and mind which are exercised in labour, he is bound to regard as another's. Now, if there be property in anything, it is that of a man in his own person, mind, and strength. All other rights are weak, unmeaning, compared with this, and in denying this all right is denied. It is true that an individual may forfeit by crime his right to the use of his limbs, perhaps to his limbs, and even to life. But the very idea of forfeiture implies that the right was originally possessed. It is true that a man may by contract give to another a limited right to his strength. But he gives only because he possesses it, and gives it for considerations which he deems beneficial to himself; and the right conferred ceases at once on violation of the conditions on which it was bestowed. To deny the right of a human being to himself, to his own limbs and faculties, to his energy of body and mind, is an absurdity too gross to be confuted by anything but a simple statement. Yet this absurdity is involved in the idea of his belonging to another.

(5.) We have a plain recognition of the principle now laid down, in the universal indignation excited towards a man who makes another his slave. Our laws know no higher crime than that of reducing a man to slavery. To steal or to buy an African on his own shores is piracy. In this act the greatest wrong is inflicted, the most sacred right violated. But if a human being cannot without infinite injustice be seized as property, then he cannot without equal wrong be held and used as such. The wrong in the first seizure lies in the destination of a human being to future bondage, to the criminal use of him as a chattel or brute. Can that very use, which makes the original seizure an enormous wrong, become gradually innocent? If the slave receive injury without measure at the first moment of the outrage, is he less injured by being held

fast the second or the third? Does the duration of wrong, the increase of it by continuance, convert it into right? It is true, in many cases, that length of possession is considered as giving a right, where the goods were acquired by unlawful means. But in these cases the goods were such as might justly be appropriated to individual use. They were intended by the Creator to be owned. They fulfil their purpose by passing into the hands of an exclusive possessor. It is essential to rightful property in a thing, that the thing from its nature may be rightfully appropriated. If it cannot originally be made one's own without crime, it certainly cannot be continued as such without guilt. Now, the ground on which the seizure of the African on his own shore is condemned is, that he is a man who has by his nature a right to be free. Ought not, then, the same condemnation to light on the continuance of his yoke? Still more. Whence is it that length of possession is considered by the laws as conferring a right? I answer, from the difficulty of determining the original proprietor, and from the apprehension of unsettling all property by carrying back inquiry beyond a certain time. Suppose, however, an article of property to be of such a nature that it could bear the name of the true original owner stamped on it in bright and indelible characters. In this case, the whole ground on which length of possession bars other claims would fail. The proprietor would not be concealed, or rendered doubtful by the lapse of time. Would not he, who should receive such an article from a robber, or a succession of robbers, be involved in their guilt? Now the true owner of a human being is made manifest to all. It is Himself. No brand on the slave was ever so conspicuous as the mark of property which God has set on him. God, in making him a rational and moral being, has put a glorious stamp on him, which all the slave legislation and slave-markets of worlds cannot

efface. Hence no right accrues to the master from the length of the wrong which has been done to the slave.

(6.) Another argument against the right of property in man may be drawn from a very obvious principle of moral science. It is a plain truth, universally received, that every right supposes or involves a corresponding obligation. If, then, a man has a right to another's person or powers, the latter is under obligation to give himself up as a chattel to the former. This is his duty. He is bound to be a slave; and bound not merely by the Christian law, which enjoins submission to injury, not merely by prudential considerations, or by the claims of public order and peace; but bound because another has a right of ownership, has a moral claim to him, so that he would be guilty of dishonesty, of robbery, in withdrawing himself from this other's service. It is his duty to work for his master, though all compulsion were withdrawn; and in deserting him he would commit the crime of taking away another man's property, as truly as if he were to carry off his owner's purse. Now, do we not instantly feel, can we help feeling, that this is false? Is the slave thus morally bound? When the African was first brought to these shores, would he have violated a solemn obligation by slipping his chain, and flying back to his native home? Would he not have been bound to seize the precious opportunity of escape? Is the slave under a moral obligation to confine himself, his wife, and children, to a spot where their union in a moment may be forcibly dissolved? Ought he not, if he can, to place himself and his family under the guardianship of equal laws? Should we blame him for leaving his yoke? Do we not feel that, in the same condition, a sense of duty would quicken our flying steps? Where, then, is the obligation which would necessarily be imposed, if the right existed which the master claims? The absence of obligation proves the want of the right. The claim is groundless. It is a cruel wrong.

(7.) I come now to what is, to my own mind, the great argument against seizing and using a man as property. He cannot be property in the sight of God and justice, because he is a Rational, Moral, Immortal Being; because created in God's image, and therefore in the highest sense his child; because created to unfold godlike faculties, and to govern himself by a Divine Law written on his heart; and republished in God's Word. His whole nature forbids that he should be seized as property. From his very nature it follows that so to seize him is to offer an insult to his Maker, and to inflict aggravated social wrong. Into every human being God has breathed an immortal spirit, more precious than the whole outward creation. No earthly or celestial language can exaggerate the worth of a human being,—no matter how obscure his condition. Thought, Reason, Conscience, the capacity of Virtue, the capacity of Christian Love, an immortal Destiny, an intimate moral connection with God—here are attributes of our common humanity which reduce to insignificance all outward distinctions, and make every human being unspeakably dear to his Maker. No matter how ignorant he may be. The capacity of Improvement allies him to the more instructed of his race, and places within his reach the knowledge and happiness of higher worlds. Every human being has in him the germ of the greatest idea in the universe, the idea of God; and to unfold this is the end of his existence. Every human being has in his breast the elements of that Divine Everlasting Law, which the highest orders of the creation obey. He has the idea of Duty; and to unfold, revere, obey this is the very purpose for which life was given. Every human being has the idea of what is meant by that word, Truth, that is, he sees, however dimly, the great object of Divine and created intelligence, and is capable of ever-enlarging perceptions of truth. Every human being has affections, which

may be purified and expanded into a Sublime Love. He has, too, the idea of Happiness, and a thirst for it which cannot be appeased. Such is our nature. Wherever we see a man, we see the possessor of these great capacities. Did God make such a being to be owned as a tree or a brute? How plainly was he made to exercise, unfold, improve his highest powers, made for a moral, spiritual good! and how is he wronged, and his Creator opposed, when he is forced and broken into a tool to another's physical enjoyment!

• Such a being was plainly made for an End in Himself. He is a Person, not a Thing. He is an End, not a mere Instrument or Means. He was made for his own virtue and happiness. Is this end reconcilable with his being held and used as a chattel? The sacrifice of such a being to another's will, to another's present, outward, ill-comprehended good, is the greatest violence which can be offered to any creature of God. It is to degrade him from his rank in the universe, to make him a means not an end, to cast him out from God's spiritual family into the brutal herd.

Such a being was plainly made to obey a Law within himself. This is the essence of a moral being. He possesses, as a part of his nature, and the most essential part, a sense of Duty, which he is to reverence and follow, in opposition to all pleasure or pain, to all interfering human wills. The great purpose of all good education and discipline is, to make a man Master of Himself, to excite him to act from a principle in his own mind, to lead him to propose his own perfection as his supreme law and end. And is this highest purpose of man's nature to be reconciled with entire subjection to a foreign will, to an outward, overwhelming force, which is satisfied with nothing but complete submission? •

The end of such a being as we have described is, manifestly, Improvement. Now it is the fundamental

law of our nature, that all our powers are to improve by free exertion. Action is the indispensable condition of progress to the intellect, conscience, and heart. Is it not plain, then, that a human being cannot, without wrong, be owned by another, who claims, as proprietor, the right to repress the powers of his slaves, to withhold from them the means of development, to keep them within the limits which are necessary to contentment in chains, to shut out every ray of light and every generous sentiment which may interfere with entire subjection to his will?

No man, who seriously considers what human nature is, and what it was made for, can think of setting up a claim to a fellow-creature. What! own a spiritual being, a being made to know and adore God, and who is to outlive the sun and stars! What! chain to our lowest uses a being made for truth and virtue! convert into a brute instrument that intelligent nature, on which the idea of Duty has dawned, and which is a nobler type of God than all outward creation! Should we not deem it a wrong which no punishment could expiate, were one of our children seized as property, and driven by the whip to toil? And shall God's child, dearer to him than an only son to a human parent, be thus degraded? Everything else may be owned in the universe; but a moral, rational being cannot be property. Suns and stars may be owned, but not the lowest spirit. Touch any thing but this. Lay not your hand on God's rational offspring. The whole spiritual world cries out, Forbear! The highest intelligences recognise their own nature, their own rights, in the humblest human being. By that priceless, immortal spirit which dwells in him, by that likeness of God which he wears, tread him not in the dust, confound him not with the brute.

We have thus seen that a human being cannot rightfully be held and used as property. No legis-

lation, not that of all countries or worlds, could, make him so. Let this be laid down, as a first, fundamental truth. Let us hold it fast, as a most sacred, precious truth. Let us hold it fast against all customs, all laws, all rank, wealth and power. Let it be armed with the whole authority of the civilized and Christian world.

I have taken it for granted that no reader would be so wanting in moral discrimination and moral feeling as to urge that men may rightfully be seized and held as property, because various governments have so ordained. What! is human legislation the measure of right? Are God's laws to be repealed by man's? Can government do no wrong? To what a mournful extent is the history of human governments a record of wrongs! How much does the progress of civilization consist in the substitution of just and humane for barbarous and oppressive laws? The individual, indeed, is never authorized to oppose physical force to unrighteous ordinances of government, as long as the community choose to sustain them. But criminal legislation ought to be freely and earnestly exposed. Injustice is never so terrible, and never so corrupting, as when armed with the sanctions of law. The authority of government, instead of being a reason for silence under wrongs, is a reason for protesting against wrong with the undivided energy of argument, entreaty, and solemn admonition.

TEMPERANCE.¹

(1837)

I CANNOT hope, in the present stage of the temperance effort, to render any important aid to our cause by novelty of suggestion. Its friends have thoroughly explored the ground over which I am to travel. Still, every man who is accustomed to think for himself is naturally attracted to particular views or points in the most familiar subject; and, by concentrating his thoughts on these, he sometimes succeeds in giving them a new prominence, in vindicating their just rank, and in securing to them an attention which they may not have received, but which is their due.

On the subject of intemperance, I have sometimes thought, perhaps without foundation, that its chief, essential evil was not brought out as thoroughly and frequently as its secondary evils, and that there was not a sufficient conviction of the depth of its causes and of the remedies which it demands. With these impressions, I invite your attention to the following topics:—the great essential evil of intemperance,—the extent of its temptations,—its causes,—the means of its prevention or cure.

(1.) I begin with asking, What is the great essential evil of intemperance? The reply is given when I say that intemperance is the *voluntary extinction of reason*.

¹ Selections from an Address at a meeting of the friends of Temperance, Boston, U.S.A., 28th Feb., 1837.

The great evil is inward or spiritual. The intemperate man divests himself, for a time, of his rational and moral nature, casts from himself self-consciousness and self-command, brings on frenzy, and, by repetition of this insanity, prostrates more and more his rational and moral powers. He sins immediately and directly against the rational nature—that divine principle which distinguishes between truth and falsehood, between right and wrong action, which distinguishes man from the brute. This is the essence of the vice, what constitutes its peculiar guilt and woe, and what should particularly impress and awaken those who are labouring for its suppression. All the other evils of intemperance are light compared with this, and almost all flow from this; and it is right, it is to be desired, that all other evils should be joined with and follow this. It is to be desired, when a man lifts a suicidal arm against his highest life, when he quenches reason and conscience, that he and all others should receive solemn, startling warning of the greatness of his guilt; that terrible outward calamities should bear witness to the inward ruin which he is working; that the handwriting of judgment and woe on his countenance, form, and whole condition, should declare what a fearful thing it is for a man, God's rational offspring, to renounce his reason and become a brute. It is common for those who argue against intemperance to describe the bloated countenance of the drunkard, now flushed and now deadly pale. They describe his trembling, palsied limbs. They describe his waning prosperity, his poverty, his despair. They describe his desolate, cheerless home, his cold hearth, his scanty board, his heart-broken wife, the squalidness of his children; and we groan in spirit over the sad recital. But it is right that all this should be. It is right that he who, forewarned, puts out the lights of understanding and conscience within him, who abandons his rank among

God's rational creatures, and takes his place among brutes, should stand a monument of wrath among his fellows, should be a teacher wherever he is seen—a teacher, in every look and motion, of the awful guilt of destroying reason. Were we so constituted that reason could be extinguished and the countenance retain its freshness, the form its grace, the body its vigour, the outward condition its prosperity, and no striking change be seen in one's home, so far from being gainers, we should lose some testimonies, of God's parental care. His care and goodness, as well as his justice, are manifested in the fearful mark He has set on the drunkard, in the blight which falls on all the drunkard's joys. These outward evils, dreadful as they seem, are but faint types of the ruin within. We should see in them God's respect to his own image in the soul, his parental warnings against the crime of quenching the intellectual and moral life.

We are too apt to fix our thoughts on the consequences or punishments of crime, and to overlook the crime itself. This is not turning punishment to its highest use. Punishment is an outward sign of inward evil. It is meant to reveal something more terrible than itself. The greatness of punishment is a mode of embodying, making visible, the magnitude of the crime to which it is attached. The miseries of intemperance, its loathsomeness, ghastliness, and pains, are not seen aright if they do not represent to us the more fearful desolation wrought by this sin in the soul.

Among the evils of intemperance, much importance is given to the poverty of which it is the cause. But this evil, great as it is, is yet light in comparison with the essential evil of intemperance, which I am so anxious to place distinctly before you. What matters it that a man be poor, if he carry into his poverty the spirit, energy, reason, and virtues of a man? What matters it that a man must, for a few years, live on bread and

water? How many of the richest are reduced by disease to a worse condition than this? Honest, virtuous, noble-minded poverty is a comparatively light evil. The ancient philosopher chose it as the condition of virtue. It has been the lot of many a Christian. The poverty of the intemperate man owes its great misery to its cause. He who makes himself a beggar, by having made himself a brute, is miserable indeed. He who has no solace, who has only agonizing recollections and harrowing remorse, as he looks on his cold hearth, his scanty table, his ragged children, has indeed to bear a crushing weight of woe. That he suffers, is a light thing. That he has brought on himself this suffering by the voluntary extinction of his reason, this is the terrible thought, the intolerable curse.

We are told that we must keep this or that man from drunkenness, to save him from 'coming on the town,' from being a burden to the city. The motive is not to be overlooked; but I cannot keep my thoughts fixed for a moment on the few hundred or thousand dollars which the intemperate cost. When I go to the poor-house, and see the degradation, the spiritual weakness, the abjectness, the half-idiot imbecility written on the drunkard's countenance, I see a ruin which makes the cost of his support a grain of dust in the scale. I am not sorry that society is taxed for the drunkard. I would it were taxed more. I would the burden of sustaining him were so heavy that we should be compelled to wake up, and ask how he may be saved from ruin. It is intended, wisely intended by God, that sin shall spread its miseries beyond itself, that no human being shall suffer alone, that the man who falls shall draw others with him, if not into his guilt, at least into a portion of his woe. If one member of the social body suffer, others must suffer too; and this is well. This is one of the dependencies by which we become interested in one another's moral safety, and are summoned to labour for the rescue of the fallen.

Intemperance is to be pitied and abhorred for its own sake much more than for its outward consequences. These consequences owe their chief bitterness to their criminal source. We speak of the miseries which the drunkard carries into his family. But take away his own brutality, and how lightened would be these miseries! We talk of his wife and children in rags. Let the rags continue; but suppose them to be the effects of an innocent cause. Suppose the drunkard to have been a virtuous husband and an affectionate father, and that sickness, not vice, has brought his family thus low. Suppose his wife and children bound to him by a strong love, which a life of labour for their support and of unwearied kindness has awakened; suppose them to know that his toils for their welfare had broken down his frame; suppose him able to say, 'We are poor in this world's goods, but rich in affection and religious trust. I am going from you; but I leave you to the Father of the fatherless, and to the widow's God.' Suppose this, and how changed these rags! How changed the cold, naked room! The heart's warmth can do much to withstand the winter's cold; and there is hope, there is honour, in this virtuous indigence. What breaks the heart of the drunkard's wife? It is not that he is poor, but that he is a drunkard. Instead of that bloated face, now distorted with passion, now robbed of every gleam of intelligence, if the wife could look on an affectionate countenance, which had for years been the interpreter of a well-principled mind and faithful heart, what an overwhelming load would be lifted from her! It is a husband whose touch is polluting, whose infirmities are the witnesses of his guilt, who has blighted all her hopes, who has proved false to the vow which made her his; it is such a husband who makes home a hell, not one whom toil and disease and providence have cast on the care of wife and children.

We look too much at the consequences of vice, too

little at the vice itself. It is vice which is the chief weight of what we call its consequence, vice which is the bitterness in the cup of human woe.

(2.) I proceed now to offer some remarks on the extent of temptations to this vice. And on this point, I shall not avail myself of the statistics of intemperance. I shall not attempt to number its victims. I wish to awaken universal vigilance, by showing that the temptations to this excess are spread through all classes of society. We are apt to speak as if the laborious, uneducated, unimproved, were alone in danger, and as if we ourselves had no interest in this cause, except as others are concerned. But it is not so; multitudes in all classes are in danger. In truth when we recall the sad histories of not a few in every circle, who once stood among the firmest and then yielded to temptation, we are taught, that none of us should dismiss fear, that we too may be walking on the edge of the abyss. The young are exposed to intemperance, for youth wants forethought, loves excitement, is apt to place happiness in gaiety, is prone to convivial pleasure, and too often finds or makes this the path to hell; nor are the old secure, for age unnerves the mind as well as the body, and silently steals away the power of self-control. The idle are in scarcely less peril than the over-worked labourer; for uneasy cravings spring up in the vacant mind, and the excitement of intoxicating draughts is greedily sought as an escape from the intolerable weariness of having nothing to do. Men of a coarse, unrefined character, fall easily into intemperance, because they see little in its brutality to disgust them. It is a sadder thought that men of genius and sensibility are hardly less exposed. Strong action of the mind is even more exhausting than the toil of the hands. It uses up, if I may so say, the finer spirits, and leaves either a sinking of the system which craves for tonics, or a restlessness which seeks

relief in deceitful sedatives. Besides, it is natural for minds of great energy to hunger for strong excitement; and this when not found in innocent occupation and amusement, is too often sought in criminal indulgence. These remarks apply peculiarly to men whose genius is poetical, imaginative, allied with and quickened by peculiar sensibility. Such men, living in worlds of their own creation, kindling themselves with ideal beauty and joy, and too often losing themselves in reveries, in which imagination ministers to appetite, and the sensual triumphs over the spiritual nature; are peculiarly in danger of losing the balance of the mind, of losing calm thought, clear judgment and moral strength of will, become children of impulse, learn to despise simple and common pleasures, and are hurried to ruin by a feverish thirst of high-wrought, delirious gratification. In such men, these mental causes of excess are often aggravated by peculiar irritableness of the nervous system. Hence the records of literature are so sad. Hence the brightest lights of the intellectual world have so often undergone disastrous eclipse; and the inspired voice of genius, so thrilling, so exalting, has died away in the brutal or idiot cries of intemperance. I have now been speaking of the highest order of intellectual men; but it may be said of men of education in general, that they must not feel themselves beyond peril. It is said that as large a proportion of intemperate men can be found among those who have gone through our colleges, as among an equal number of men in the same sphere of life who have not enjoyed the same culture. It must not, however, be inferred that the cultivation of the intellect affords no moral aids. The truth is, that its good tendencies are thwarted. Educated men fall victims to temptation as often as other men, not because education is inoperative, but because our public seminaries give a partial training, being directed almost

wholly to the development of the intellect, and very little to moral culture, and still less to the invigoration of the physical system. Another cause of the evil is probably this, that young men, liberally educated, enter on professions which give at first little or no occupation, which expose them, perhaps for years, to the temptations of leisure, the most perilous in an age of inexperience and passion. Accordingly the ranks of intemperance are recruited from that class which forms the chief hope of society. And I would I could stop here. But there is another prey on which intemperance seizes, still more to be deplored, and that is Woman. I know no sight on earth more sad than woman's countenance, which once knew no suffusion but the glow of exquisite feeling, or the blush of hallowed modesty, crimsoned, deformed by intemperance. Even woman is not safe. The delicacy of her physical organization exposes her to inequalities of feeling which tempt to the seductive relief given by cordials. Man with his iron nerves little knows what the sensitive frame of woman suffers, how many desponding imaginations throng on her in her solitudes, how often she is exhausted by unrelenting cares, and how much the power of self-control is impaired by repeated derangements of her frail system. The truth should be told. In all our families, no matter what their condition, there are endangered individuals, and fear and watchfulness in regard to intemperance belong to all.

Do not say that I exaggerate your exposure to intemperance. Let no man say, when he thinks of the drunkard, broken in health and spoiled of intellect, 'I can never so fall.' He thought as little of falling in his earlier years. The promise of his youth was as bright as yours; and even after he began his downward course he was as unsuspecting as the firmest around him, and would have repelled as indignantly the admonition to

beware of intemperance. The danger of this vice lies in its almost imperceptible approach. Few who perish by it know its first accesses. Youth does not see or suspect drunkenness in the sparkling beverage which quickens all its susceptibilities of joy. The invalid does not see it in the cordial, which his physician prescribes, and which gives new tone to his debilitated organs. The man of thought and genius detects no palsying poison in the draught which seems a spring of inspiration to intellect and imagination. The lover of social pleasure little dreams that the glass which animates conversation will ever be drunk in solitude, and will sink him too low for the intercourse in which his now delights. Intemperance comes with noiseless step, and binds its first cords with a touch too light, to be felt. This truth of mournful experience should be treasured up by us all, and should influence the habits and arrangements of domestic and social life in every class of the community.

Such is the extent of the temptations of this vice. It is true, however, that whilst its ravages may be traced through all conditions, they are chiefly to be found in the poorer and labouring portions of society. Here its crimes and woes swell to an amount which startles and appals us. Here the evil is to be chiefly withstood. I shall, therefore, in my following remarks, confine myself very much to the causes and remedies of intemperance in this class of the community.

(3.) Among the causes of intemperance in the class of which I have spoken, not a few are to be found in the present state of society, which every man does something to confirm, and which brings to most of us many privileges. On these I shall now insist, because they show our obligation to do what we can to remove the evil. It is just that they who receive good should aid those who receive harm from our present social organization. Undoubtedly, the primary cause of in-

temperance is in the intemperate themselves, in their moral weakness and irresolution, in the voluntary surrender of themselves to temptation. Still, society, by increasing temptation and diminishing men's power to resist, becomes responsible for all wide-spread vices, and is bound to put forth all its energy for their suppression. This leads me to consider some of the causes of intemperance which have their foundation in our social state.

One cause of the commonness of intemperance in the present state of things, is the heavy burden of care and toil, which is laid on a large multitude of men. Multitudes, to earn subsistence for themselves and their families, are often compelled to undergo a degree of labour exhausting to the spirits and injurious to health. Of consequence, relief is sought in stimulants. We do not find that civilization lightens men's toils; as yet it has increased them; and in this effect, I see the sign of a deep defect in what we call the progress of society. It cannot be the design of the Creator, that the whole of life should be spent in drudgery for the supply of animal wants. That civilization is very imperfect, in which the mass of men can redeem no time from bodily labour, for intellectual, moral, and social culture. It is melancholy to witness the degradation of multitudes to the condition of beasts of burden. Exhausting toils unfit the mind to withstand temptation. The man, spent with labour, and cut off by his condition from higher pleasures, is impelled to seek a deceitful solace in sensual excess. How the condition of society shall be so changed as to prevent excessive pressure on any class, is undoubtedly a hard question. One thing seems plain, that there is no tendency in our present institutions and habits to bring relief. On the contrary, rich and poor seem to be more and more impressed with incessant toil, exhausting forethought, anxious struggles, feverish competitions. Some look to legislation to lighten the bur-

den of the labouring class. But equal laws and civil liberty have no power to remove the shocking contrast of condition which all civilised communities present. Inward, spiritual improvement, I believe, is the only sure remedy for social evils. What we need is, a new diffusion of Christian, fraternal love, to stir up the powerful and prosperous, to succour liberally and encourage the unfortunate or weak, and a new diffusion of intellectual and moral force, to make the multitude efficient for their own support, to form them to self-control, and to breathe a spirit of independence, which will scorn to ask or receive unnecessary relief.

Another cause, intimately connected with the last, is the intellectual depression and the ignorance to which many are subjected. They who toil from morning to night, without seasons of thought and mental improvement, are of course exceedingly narrowed in their faculties, views, and sources of gratification. The present moment, and the body, engross their thoughts. The pleasures of intellect, of imagination, of taste, of reading, of cultivated society, are almost entirely denied them. What pleasures but those of the senses remain? Unused to reflection and forethought, how dim must be their perceptions of religion and duty, and how little fitted are they to cope with temptation! Undoubtedly in this country, this cause of intemperance is less operative than in others. There is less brutal ignorance here than elsewhere; but, on the other hand, the facilities of excess are incomparably greater, so that for the uneducated, the temptation to vice may be stronger in this than in less enlightened lands. Our outward prosperity, unaccompanied with proportionate moral and mental improvement, becomes a mighty impulse to intemperance, and this impulse the prosperous are bound to withstand.

I proceed to another cause of intemperance, among the poor and labouring classes, and that is the general

sensuality and earthliness of the community. There is indeed much virtue, much spirituality, in the prosperous classes, but it is generally unseen. There is a vastly greater amount in these classes, of worldliness, of devotion to the senses, and this stands out in bold relief. The majority live unduly for the body. Where there is little intemperance in the common acceptance of that term, there is yet a great amount of excess. Thousands, who are never drunk, place their chief happiness in pleasures of the table. How much of the intellect of this community is palsied, how much of the expression of the countenance blotted out, how much of the spirit buried, through unwise indulgence! What is the great lesson, which the more prosperous classes teach to the poorer? Not self-denial, not spirituality, not the great Christian truth, that human happiness lies in the triumphs of the mind over the body, in inward force and life. The poorer are taught by the richer, that the greatest good is ease, indulgence. The voice which descends from the prosperous, contradicts the lessons of Christ and of sound philosophy. It is the sensuality, the earthliness of those who give the tone to public sentiment, which is chargeable with a vast amount of the intemperance of the poor. How is the poor man to resist intemperance? Only by a moral force, an energy of will, a principle of self-denial in his soul. And where is this taught him? Does a higher morality come to him from those whose condition makes them his superiors? The great inquiry which he hears among the better educated is, What shall we eat and drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? Unceasing struggles for outward, earthly, sensual good, constitute the chief activity which he sees around him. To suppose that the poorer classes should receive lessons of luxury and self-indulgence from the more prosperous, and should yet resist the most urgent temptations to excess, is to expect from them a moral force, in which.

we feel ourselves to be sadly wanting. In their hard conflicts, how little of life-giving truth, of elevating thought, of heavenly aspiration, do they receive from those above them in worldly condition !

Another cause of intemperance is the want of self-respect which the present state of society induces among the poor and laborious. Just as far as wealth is the object of worship, the measure of men's importance, the badge of distinction, so far there will be a tendency to self-contempt and self-abandonment among those whose lot gives them no chance of its acquisition. Such naturally feel as if the great good of life were denied them. They see themselves neglected. Their condition cuts them off from communication with the improved. They think they have little stake in the general weal. They do not feel as if they had a character to lose. Nothing reminds them of the greatness of their nature. Nothing teaches them that in their obscure lot they may secure the highest good on earth. Catching from the general tone of society the ruinous notion that wealth is honour as well as happiness, they see in their narrow lot nothing to inspire self-respect. In this delusion they are not more degraded than the prosperous ; they but echo the voice of society : but to them the delusion brings a deeper, immediate ruin. By sinking them in their own eyes, it robs them of a powerful protection against low vices. It prepares them for coarse manners, for gross pleasures, for descent to brutal degradation. Of all classes of society, the poor should be treated with peculiar deference, as the means of counteracting their chief peril ; I mean, the loss of self-respect. But to all their other evil is added peculiar neglect. Can we then wonder at their fall ?

I might name other causes in our social constitution favouring intemperance ; but I must pass them, and will suggest one characteristic of our times, which

increases all the tendencies to this vice. Our times are distinguished by what is called a love of excitement; in other words, by a love of strong stimulants. To be stimulated, excited, is the universal want. The calmness, sobriety, plodding industry of our fathers have been succeeded by a feverish restlessness. The books that are read are not the great, standard, immortal works of genius, which require calm thought, and inspire deep feeling; but ephemeral works, which are run through with a railroad rapidity, and which give a pleasure not unlike that produced by exhilarating draughts. Business is become a race, and is hurried on by the excitement of great risks, and the hope of great profits. Even religion partakes the general restlessness. In some places, extravagant measures, which storm the nervous system, and drive the more sensitive to the borders of insanity, are resorted to for its promotion. Everywhere people go to church to be excited rather than improved. This thirst for stimulants cannot be shut up in certain spheres. It spreads through and characterizes the community. It pervades those classes who, unhappily, can afford themselves but one strong stimulus, intoxicating liquor: and among these the spirit of the age breaks out in intemperance.

(4.) I have now set before you some of the causes of intemperance in our present social state; and this I have done that you may feel that society, in all its ranks, especially in the highest, is bound in justice to resist the evil; and not only justice, but benevolence pleads with us to spare no efforts for its prevention or cure. The thought that in the bosom of our society are multitudes standing on the brink of perdition, multitudes who are strongly tempted to debase and destroy their rational nature, to sink into brutal excess, to seal their ruin in this world and in the world to come, ought to weigh on us as a burden, ought to inspire deeper concern than the visitation of pestilence;

ought to rouse every man who has escaped this degradation to do what he may to rescue the fallen, and still more, to save the falling.

The question now comes, How shall we arrest, how suppress, this great evil? Such is our last inquiry, and to this I answer, there are two modes of action. To rescue men, we must act on them inwardly or outwardly. We must either give them strength within, to withstand the temptations to intemperance, or we must remove these temptations without. We must increase the power of resistance, or diminish the pressure which is to be resisted. Both modes of influence are useful, but the first incalculably the most important. No man is safe against this foe, but he who is armed with moral force, with strength in his own soul, with the might of principle, and a virtuous will. The great means, then, of repressing intemperance, in those portions of society which are most exposed to it, is to communicate to them, or awaken in them, moral strength, the power of self-denial, a nobler and more vigorous action of conscience and religious principle. In other words, to save the labouring and poor from intemperance, we must set in action amongst them the means of intellectual, moral, and religious improvement. We must strive to elevate them as rational and moral beings, to unfold their highest nature. It is idle to think that, whilst these classes remain the same in other respects, they can be cured of intemperance. Intemperance does not stand alone in their condition and character. It is a part or sign of general degradation. It can only be effectually removed by exalting their whole character and condition. To heal a diseased limb or organ, you must relieve and strengthen the whole body. So it is with the mind. We cannot, if we would, remove those vices from the poor which are annoying to ourselves, and leave them, in other respects, as corrupt as before. Nothing but a general improvement of their nature can

fortify them against the crimes which make them scourges alike to themselves and to their race.

And how may moral strength, force of principle, be communicated to the less prosperous classes of society? I answer, first, the surest means is to increase it among the more favoured. All classes of a community have connections, sympathies. Let selfishness and sensuality reign among the prosperous and educated, and the poor and uneducated will reflect these vices in grosser forms. That man is the best friend to temperance, among high and low, whose character and life express clearly and strongly moral energy, self-denial, superiority to the body, superiority to wealth, elevation of sentiment and principle. The greatest benefactor to society is not he who serves it by single acts, but whose general character is the manifestation of a higher life and spirit than pervades the mass. Such men are the salt of the earth. The might of individual virtue surpasses all other powers. The multiplication of individuals of true force and dignity of mind would be the surest of all omens of the suppression of intemperance in every condition of society.

Another means is, the cultivation of a more fraternal intercourse than now exists between the more and less improved portions of the community. Our present social barriers and distinctions, in so far as they restrict sympathy, and substitute the spirit of caste, the bigotry of rank, for the spirit of humanity, for reverence of our common nature, ought to be reprobated as gross violations of the Christian law. Those classes of society which have light, strength, and virtue, are bound to communicate these to such as want them. The weak, ignorant, falling and fallen, ought not to be cut off from their more favoured brethren, ought not to be left to act continually and exclusively on one another, and thus to propagate their crimes and woes without end. The good should form a holy conspiracy against evil,

should assail it by separate and joint exertion, should approach it, study it, weep and pray over it, and throw all their souls into efforts for its removal. My friends, you whom God has prospered, whom He has enlightened, in whose hearts He has awakened a reverence for Himself, what are you doing for the fallen, the falling, the miserable of your race? When an improved Christian thinks of the mass of unpitied, unfriended guilt in this city, must he not be shocked at the hardness of all our hearts? Are we not all of one blood, one nature, one heavenly descent; and are outward distinctions, which to-morrow are to be buried for ever in the tomb, to divide us from one another, to cut off the communications of brotherly sympathy and aid? In a Christian community, not one human being should be left to fall, without counsel, remonstrance, sympathy, encouragement, from others more enlightened and virtuous than himself. Say not this cannot be done. I know it cannot be done without great changes in our habits, views, feelings; but these changes must be made. A new bond must unite the scattered portions of men. A new sense of responsibility must stir up the enlightened, the prosperous, the virtuous. Christianity demands this. The progress of society demands it. I see blessed omens of this, and they are among the brightest features of our times.

Again, to elevate and strengthen the more exposed classes of society, it is indispensable that a higher Education should be afforded them. We boast of the means of education afforded to the poorest here. It may be said with truth, in regard to both rich and poor, that these means are very deficient. As to moral education, hardly any provisions are made for it in our public schools. To educate is something more than to teach those elements of knowledge which are needed to get a subsistence. It is to exercise and call out the higher faculties and affections of a human being.

Education is not the authoritative, compulsory, mechanical training of passive pupils, but the influence of gifted and quickening minds on the spirits of the young. Such education is, as yet, sparingly enjoyed, and cannot be too fervently desired. Of what use, let me ask, is the wealth of this community, but to train up a better generation than ourselves? Of what use, I ask, is freedom, except to call forth the best powers of all classes and of every individual? What, but human improvement, is the great end of society? Why ought we to sustain so anxiously republican institutions, if they do not tend to form a nobler race of men, and to spread nobleness through all conditions of social life? It is a melancholy and prevalent error among us, that persons in the labouring classes are denied by their conditions any considerable intellectual improvement. They must live, it is thought, to work, not to fulfil the great end of a human being, which is to unfold his divinest powers and affections. But it is not so. The poorest child might and ought to have liberal means of self-improvement; and were there a true reverence among us for human nature and for Christianity, he would find them. In a letter, recently received from a most intelligent traveller in Germany, I am informed that in certain parts of that country there is found, in the most depressed classes, a degree of intellectual culture not generally supposed to consist with their lot; that a sense of the beautiful in nature and art produces much happiness in a portion of society which among us is thought to be disqualified for this innocent and elevated pleasure; that the teaching in Sunday schools is in some places more various than here; and that a collection of books and a degree of scientific knowledge may be met in cottages far inferior to the dwellings of our husbandmen. 'In short,' my friend adds, 'I have seen abundant proof that intellectual culture, as found here, spreads its light and comfort

through a class that hardly exists at all with us, or where it does exist, is generally supposed to labour under a degree of physical wretchedness inconsistent with such culture.' Information of this kind should breathe new hope into philanthropic labours for the intellectual and moral life of every class in society. How much may be done in this city to spread knowledge, vigour of thought, the sense of beauty, the pleasures of the imagination and the fine arts, and, above all, the influences of religion, through our whole community! Were the prosperous and educated to learn that, after providing for their families, they cannot better employ their possessions and influence than in forwarding the improvement and elevation of society, how soon would this city be regenerated! How many generous spirits might be enlisted here by a wise bounty in the work of training their fellow-creatures! Wealth cannot be better used than in rescuing men of vigorous and disinterested minds from worldly toils and cares, in giving them time and opportunity for generous self-culture, and in enabling them to devote their whole strength and being to a like culture of their race. The surest mark of a true civilization is, that the arts which minister to sensuality decrease, and spiritual employments are multiplied, or that more and more of the highest ability in the state is withdrawn from labours for the animal life, and consecrated to the work of calling forth the intellect, the imagination, the conscience, the pure affections, the moral energy, of the community at large, and especially of the young. What is now wasted among us in private show and luxury, if conscientiously and wisely devoted to the furnishing of means of generous culture to all classes among us, would render this city the wonder and joy of the whole earth. What is thus wasted might supply not only the means of education in the sciences, but in the refined arts. Music might here be spread as freely as

in Germany, and be made a lightener of toil, a cheerer of society, a relief of loneliness, a solace in the poorest dwellings. Still more, what we now waste would furnish this city, in a course of years, with the chief attractions of Paris, with another Louvre, and with a Garden of Plants, where the gifted of all classes might have opportunity to cultivate the love of nature and art. Happily, the cause of a higher education begins to find friends here, thanks to that enlightened and noble-minded son of Boston, whose ashes now slumber on a foreign shore, but who has left to his birthplace a testimony of filial love, in his munificent bequest for the diffusion of liberal instruction through this metropolis. Honoured be the name of Lowell, the intellectual benefactor of his native city! A community, directing its energies chiefly to a higher education of its rising members, to a generous development of human nature, would achieve what as yet has not entered human thought; and it is for this end that we ought to labour. Our show and our luxury, how contemptible in comparison with the improvement of our families, neighbourhood, and race!

We want better teachers and more teachers for all classes of society, for rich and poor, for children and adults. We want that the resources of the community should be directed to the procuring of better instructors, as its highest concern. One of the surest signs of the regeneration of society will be the elevation of the art of teaching to the highest rank in the community. When a people shall learn that its greatest benefactors and most important members are men devoted to the liberal instruction of all its classes, to the work of raising to life its buried intellect, it will have opened to itself the path of true glory. This truth is making its way. Socrates is now regarded as the greatest man in an age of great men. The name of King has grown dim before that of Apostle. To teach, whether by

word or action, is the highest function on earth. It is commonly supposed that instructors are needed only in the earlier years of life. But ought the education of a human being ever to cease? And may it not always be forwarded by good instruction? Some of us, indeed, can dispense with all teachers save the silent book. But to the great majority the voice of living teachers is an indispensable means of cultivation. The discovery and supply of this want would give a new aspect to a community. Nothing is more needed than that men of superior gifts and of benevolent spirit should devote themselves to the instruction of the less enlightened classes in the great end of life, in the dignity of their nature, in their rights and duties, in the history, laws, and institutions of their country, in the philosophy of their employments, in the laws, harmonies, and productions of outward nature, and especially in the art of bringing up children in health of body and in vigour and purity of mind. We need a new profession or vocation, the object of which shall be to wake up the intellect in those spheres where it is now buried in habitual slumber. We honour, and cannot too much honour, the philanthropist, who endows permanent institutions for the relief of human suffering; but not less good, I apprehend, would be accomplished by inquiring for and seizing on men of superior ability and disinterestedness, and by sending them forth to act immediately on society. A philanthropist who should liberally afford to one such man the means of devoting himself to the cultivation of the poorer classes of society would confer invaluable good. One gifted man, with his heart in the work, who should live among the uneducated, to spread useful knowledge and quickening truth, by conversation and books, by frank and friendly intercourse, by encouraging meetings for improvement, by forming the more teachable into classes, and giving to these the animation of his presence and guidance, by

bringing parents to an acquaintance with the principles of physical, intellectual, and moral education, by instructing families in the means and conditions of health, by using, in a word, all the methods which an active, generous mind would discover or invent for awakening intelligence and moral life; one gifted man, so devoted, might impart a new tone and spirit to a considerable circle; and what would be the result were such men to be multiplied and combined, so that a community might be pervaded by their influence? We owe much to the writings of men of genius, piety, science, and exalted virtue. But most of these remain shut up in narrow spheres. We want a class of liberal instructors whose vocation it shall be to place the views of the most enlightened minds within the reach of a more and more extensive portion of their fellow-creatures. The wealth of a community should flow out like water for the preparation and employment of such teachers, for enlisting powerful and generous minds in the work of giving impulse to their race. Jesus Christ, in instituting the ministry, laid the foundation of the intellectual and moral agency which I now urge. On this foundation we ought to build more and more, until a life-giving influence shall penetrate all classes of society. What a painful thought is it that such an immense amount of intellectual and moral power, of godlike energy, is this very moment lying dead among us! Can we do nothing for its resurrection? Until this be done, we may lop off the branches of intemperance, but its root will live; and happy shall we be if its poisonous shade do not again darken our land. Let it not be said that the laborious can find no time for such instruction as is now proposed. More or less leisure, if sought, can be found in almost every life. Nor let it be said that men able and disposed to carry on this work must not be looked for in such a world as ours. Christianity, which has wrought so many miracles of beneficence, which has

sent forth so many apostles and martyrs, so many Howards and Clarksons, can raise up labourers for this harvest also. Nothing is needed but a new pouring out of the spirit of Christian love, nothing but a new comprehension of the brotherhood of the human race, to call forth efforts which seem impossibilities in a self-seeking and self-indulging age.

I will add but one more means of giving moral power and general improvement to those portions of the community in which intemperance finds its chief victims. We must not only promote education in general, but especially send among them Christian instruction, Christian teachers, who shall be wholly devoted to their spiritual welfare. And here I cannot but express my joy at the efforts made for establishing a ministry among the poor in this and other cities. Though not sustained as it should be, it yet subsists in sufficient vigour to show what it can accomplish. I regard this institution as among the happiest omens of our times. It shows that the spirit of him who came to seek and to save that which was lost is not dead among us. Christianity is the mighty power before which intemperance is to fall. Christianity, faithfully preached, assails and withstands this vice, by appealing, as nothing else can, to men's hopes and fears, by speaking to conscience in the name of the Almighty Judge, by speaking to the heart in the name of the Merciful Father, by proffering strength to human weakness and pardon to human guilt, by revealing to men an immortal nature within, and an eternal state before them, by spreading over this life a brightness borrowed from the life to come, by awakening generous affections, and binding man by new ties to God and his race. But Christianity, to fulfil this part of its mission, to reach those who are most exposed to intemperance, must not only speak in the churches, where these are seldom found, but must enter their dwellings in the persons of its ministers, must commune

with them in the language of friendship, must take their children under its guardianship and control. The ministry for the poor, sustained by men worthy of the function, will prove one of the most powerful barriers ever raised against intemperance.

The means of suppressing this vice on which I have hitherto insisted, have for their object to strengthen and elevate the whole character of the classes most exposed to intemperance. I would now suggest a few means fitted to accomplish the same end, by diminishing or removing the temptations to this vice.

The first means which I shall suggest of placing a people beyond the temptations to intemperance, is to furnish them with the means of innocent pleasure. This topic, I apprehend, has not been sufficiently insisted on. I feel its importance, and propose to enlarge upon it, though some of the topics which I may introduce may seem to some hardly consistent with the gravity of this occasion. We ought not, however, to respect the claims of that gravity which prevents a faithful exposition of what may serve and improve our fellow-creatures.

I have said, a people should be guarded against temptation to unlawful pleasures by furnishing the means of innocent ones. By innocent pleasures I mean such as excite moderately; such as produce a cheerful frame of mind, not boisterous mirth; such as refresh, instead of exhausting, the system; such as occur frequently, rather than continue long; such as send us back to our daily duties invigorated in body and in spirit; such as we can partake in the presence and society of respectable friends; such as consist with, and are favourable to, a grateful piety; such as are chastened by self-respect, and are accompanied with the consciousness that life has a higher end than to be amused. In every community there must be pleasures, relaxations, and means of agreeable excitement; and if

innocent ones are not furnished, resort will be had to criminal. Man was made to enjoy, as well as to labour; and the state of society should be adapted to this principle of human nature. France, especially before the revolution, has been represented as a singularly temperate country; a fact to be explained, at least in part, by the constitutional cheerfulness of that people, and by the prevalence of simple and innocent gratifications, especially among the peasantry. Men drink to excess very often to shake off depression, or to satisfy the restless thirst for agreeable excitement; and these motives are excluded in a cheerful community. A gloomy state of society, in which there are few innocent recreations, may be expected to abound in drunkenness, if opportunities are afforded. The savage drinks to excess because his hours of sobriety are dull and unvaried; because in losing the consciousness of his condition and his existence, he loses little which he wishes to retain. The labouring classes are most exposed to intemperance, because they have at present few other pleasurable excitements. A man who, after toil, has resources of blameless recreation, is less tempted than other men to seek self-oblivion. He has too many of the pleasures of a man to take up with those of a brute. Thus, the encouragement of simple, innocent enjoyment is an important means of temperance.

These remarks show the importance of encouraging the efforts which have commenced among us for spreading the accomplishment of Music through our whole community. It is now proposed that this shall be made a regular branch in our schools; and every friend of the people must wish success to the experiment. I am not now called to speak of all the good influences of music, particularly of the strength which it may and ought to give to the religious sentiment, and to all pure and generous emotions. Regarded merely as a refined

pleasure, it has a favourable bearing on public morals. Let taste and skill in this beautiful art be spread among us, and every family will have a new resource. Home will gain a new attraction. Social intercourse will be more cheerful, and an innocent public amusement will be furnished to the community. Public amusements, bringing multitudes together to kindle with one emotion, to share the same innocent joy, have a humanizing influence; and among these bonds of society perhaps no one produces so much unmix'd good as music. What a fulness of enjoyment has our Creator placed within our reach, by surrounding us with an atmosphere which may be shaped into sweet sounds? And yet this goodness is almost lost upon us, through want of culture of the organ by which this provision is to be enjoyed.

Dancing is an amusement which has been discouraged in our country by many of the best people, and not without reason. Dancing is associated in their minds with balls; and this is one of the worst forms of social pleasure. The time consumed in preparation for a ball, the waste of thought upon it, the extravagance of dress, the late hours, the exhaustion of strength, the exposure of health, and the languor of the succeeding day, - these and other evils connected with this amusement are strong reasons for banishing it from the community. But dancing ought not therefore to be proscribed. On the contrary, balls should be discouraged for this among other reasons, that dancing, instead of being a rare pleasure, requiring elaborate preparation, may become an every-day amusement, and may mix with our common intercourse. This exercise is among the most healthful. The body as well as the mind feels its gladdening influence. No amusement seems more to have a foundation in our nature. The animation of youth overflows spontaneously in harmonious movements. The true idea of dancing entitles

it to favour. Its end is, to realize perfect grace in motion; and who does not know that a sense of the graceful is one of the higher faculties of our nature? It is to be desired that dancing should become too common among us to be made the object of special preparation as in the ball; that members of the same family, when confined by unfavourable weather, should recur to it for exercise and exhilaration; that branches of the same family should enliven in this way their occasional meetings; that it should fill up an hour in all the assemblages for relaxation in which the young form a part. It is to be desired that this accomplishment should be extended to the labouring classes of society, not only as an innocent pleasure, but as a means of improving the manners. Why shall not gracefulness be spread through the whole community? From the French nation we learn that a degree of grace and refinement of manners may pervade all classes. The philanthropist and Christian must desire to break down the partition-walls between human beings in different conditions; and one means of doing this is to remove the conscious awkwardness which confinement to laborious occupations is apt to induce. An accomplishment giving free and graceful movement, though a far weaker bond than intellectual or moral culture, still does something to bring those who partake it near each other.

I approach another subject, on which a greater variety of opinion exists than on the last, and that is the Theatre. In its present state, the theatre deserves no encouragement. It is an accumulation of immoral influences. It has nourished intemperance and all vice. In saying this, I do not say that the amusement is radically, essentially evil. I can conceive of a theatre which would be the noblest of all amusements, and would take a high rank among the means of refining the taste and elevating the character of the people. The

deep woes, the mighty and terrible passions, and the sublime emotions of genuine tragedy, are fitted to thrill us with human sympathies, with profound interest in our nature, with a consciousness of what man can do and dare and suffer, with an awed feeling of the fearful mysteries of life. The soul of the spectator is stirred from its depths; and the lethargy in which so many live is roused, at least for a time, to some intenseness of thought and sensibility. The drama answers a high purpose when it places us in the presence of the most solemn and striking events of human history, and lays bare to us the human heart in its most powerful, appalling, glorious workings. But how little does the theatre accomplish its end? How often is it disgraced by monstrous distortions of human nature, and still more disgraced by profaneness, coarseness, indelicacy, low wit, such as no woman worthy of the name can hear without a blush, and no man can take pleasure in without self-degradation. Is it possible that a Christian and a refined people can resort to theatres where exhibitions of dancing are given fit only for brothels, and where the most licentious class in the community throng unconcealed to tempt and destroy? That the theatre should be suffered to exist in its present degradation is a reproach to the community. Were it to fall, a better drama might spring up in its place. In the meantime, is there not an amusement, having an affinity with the drama, which might be usefully introduced among us? I mean Recitation. A work of genius, recited by a man of fine taste, enthusiasm, and powers of elocution, is a very pure and high gratification. Were this art cultivated and encouraged, great numbers, now insensible to the most beautiful compositions, might be waked up to their excellence and power. It is not easy to conceive of a more effectual way of spreading a refined taste through a community. The drama, undoubtedly, appeals more strongly to the passions than recitation; but

the latter brings out the meaning of the author more. Shakspeare, worthily recited, would be better understood than on the stage. Then, in recitation, we escape the weariness of listening to poor performers, who, after all, fill up most of the time at the theatre. Recitation, sufficiently varied, so as to include pieces of chaste wit as well as of pathos, beauty, and sublimity, is adapted to our present intellectual progress as much as the drama falls below it. Should this exhibition be introduced among us successfully, the result would be that the power of recitation would be extensively called forth, and this would be added to our social and domestic pleasures.

I have spoken in this discourse of intellectual culture, as a defence against intemperance, by giving force and elevation to the mind. It also does great good as a source of amusement; and on this ground should be spread through the community. A cultivated mind may be said to have infinite stores of innocent gratification. Everything may be made interesting to it, by becoming a subject of thought or inquiry. Books, regarded merely as a gratification, are worth more than all the luxuries on earth. A taste for literature secures cheerful occupation for the unemployed and languid hours of life; and how many persons, in these hours, for want of innocent resources, are now impelled to coarse and brutal pleasures? How many young men can be found in this city who, unaccustomed to find a companion in a book, and strangers to intellectual activity, are almost driven, in the long, dull evenings of winter, to haunts of intemperance and depraving society? It is one of the good signs of the times that lectures on literature and science are taking their place among our public amusements, and attract even more than theatres. This is one of the first-fruits of our present intellectual culture. What a harvest may we hope for from its wider diffusion!

In these remarks, I have insisted on the importance of increasing innocent gratifications in a community. Let us become a more cheerful, and we shall become a more temperate, people. To increase our susceptibility of innocent pleasure, and to remove many of the sufferings which tempt to evil habits, it would be well if physical as well as moral education were to receive greater attention. There is a puny, half-healthy, half-diseased state of the body too common among us, which by producing melancholy and restlessness, and by weakening the energy of the will, is a strong incitement to the use of hurtful stimulants. Many a case of intemperance has had its origin in bodily infirmity. Physical vigour is not only valuable for its own sake, but it favours temperance, by opening the mind to cheerful impressions, and by removing those indescribable feelings of sinking, disquiet, depression, which experience alone can enable you to understand. I have pleaded for mental culture: but nothing is gained by sacrificing the body to the mind. Let not intellectual education be sought at the expense of health. Let not our children in their early years be instructed, as is too common, in close, unventilated rooms, where they breathe for hours a tainted air. Our whole nature must be cared for. We must become a more cheerful, animated people; and for this end we must propose, in our systems of education, the invigoration of both body and mind.

I am aware that the views now expressed may not find unmixed favour with all the friends of temperance. To some, perhaps to many, religion and amusement seem mutually hostile, and he who pleads for the one may fall under suspicion of unfaithfulness to the other. But to fight against our nature is not to serve the cause of piety or sound morals. God, who gave us our nature, who has constituted body and mind incapable of continued effort, who has implanted a strong desire for

recreation after labour, who has made us for smiles much more than for tears, who has made laughter the most contagious of all sounds, whose Son hallowed a marriage feast by his presence and sympathy, who has sent the child fresh from his creating hand to develop its nature by active sports, and who has endowed both young and old with a keen susceptibility of enjoyment from wit and humour,—He, who has thus formed us, cannot have intended us for a dull, monotonous life, and cannot frown on pleasures which solace our fatigue and refresh our spirits for coming toils. It is not only possible to reconcile amusement with duty, but to make it the means of more animated exertion, more faithful attachments, more grateful piety. True religion is at once authoritative and benign. It calls us to suffer, to die, rather than to swerve a hair's breadth from what God enjoins as right and good; but it teaches us that it is right and good, in ordinary circumstances, to unite relaxation with toil, to accept God's gifts with cheerfulness, and to lighten the heart, in the intervals of exertion, by social pleasures. A religion giving dark views of God and infusing superstitious fear of innocent enjoyment, instead of aiding sober habits, will, by making men abject and sad, impair their moral force, and prepare them for intemperance as a refuge from depression or despair.

Two other means remain to be mentioned for removing the temptations to intemperance, and these are the discouragement of the use and the discouragement of the sale of ardent spirits in the community.

First, we should discourage the use of ardent spirits in the community. It is very plain—too plain to be insisted on—that to remove what intoxicates is to remove intoxication. In proportion as ardent spirits are banished from our houses, our tables, our hospitalities—in proportion as those who have influence and authority in the community abstain themselves, and

lead their dependents to abstain, from their use—in that proportion the occasions of excess must be diminished, the temptations to it must disappear. It is objected, I know, that, if we begin to give up what others will abuse, we must give up everything, because there is nothing which men will not abuse. I grant it is not easy to define the limits at which concessions are to stop. Were we called on to relinquish an important comfort of life, because others were perverting it into an instrument of crime and woe, we should be bound to pause and deliberate before we act. But no such plea can be set up in the case before us. Ardent spirits are not an important comfort, and in no degree a comfort. They give no strength; they contribute nothing to health; they can be abandoned without the slightest evil. They aid men neither to bear the burden nor to discharge the duties of life; and in saying this, I stop short of the truth. It is not enough to say that they never do good; they generally injure. In their moderate use, they act, in general, unfavourably on body and mind. According to respectable physicians, they are not digested like food, but circulate unchanged like a poison through the system. Like other poisons, they may occasionally benefit as medicines; but when made a beverage by the healthy, they never do good; they generally are pernicious. They are no more intended by Providence for drink, than opium is designed for food. Consider next, that ardent spirits are not only without benefit when moderately used, but that they instigate to immoderate use; that they beget a craving, a feverish thirst, which multitudes want power to resist; that in some classes of society, great numbers become their victims, are bereft by them of reason, are destroyed in body and soul, destroyed here and hereafter; that families are thus made desolate, parents hurried to a premature grave, and children trained up to crime and shame. Consider all this, and then judge.

as in the sight of God, whether you are not bound to use your whole influence in banishing the use of spirits, as one of the most pernicious habits, from the community. If you were to see, as a consequence of this beverage, a loathsome and mortal disease breaking out occasionally in all ranks, and sweeping away crowds in the most depressed portion of society, would you not lift up your voices against it? And is not an evil more terrible than pestilence the actual frequent result of the use of spirituous liquors? That use you are bound to discourage; and how? By abstaining wholly yourselves, by excluding ardent spirits wholly from your tables, by giving your whole weight and authority to abstinence. This practical solemn testimony, borne by the good and respectable, cannot but spread a healthful public sentiment through the whole community. This is especially our duty at the present moment, when a great combined effort of religious and philanthropic men is directed, against this evil, and when an impression has been made on the community surpassing the most sanguine hopes. At the present moment, he who uses ardent spirits, or introduces them into his hospitalities, virtually arrays himself against the cause of temperance and humanity. He not merely gives an example to his children and his domestics which he may one day bitterly rue; he withstands the good in their struggles for the virtue and happiness of mankind. He forsakes the standard of social reform, and throws himself into the ranks of its foes.

After these remarks, it will follow that we should discourage the sale of ardent spirits. What ought not to be used as a beverage, ought not to be sold as such. What the good of the community requires us to expel, no man has a moral right to supply. That intemperance is dreadfully multiplied by the number of licensed shops for the retailing of spirits, we all know. That these should be shut, every good man desires. Law

however, cannot shut them except in a limited extent, or only in a few favoured parts of the country. Law is here the will of the people, and the legislature can do little unless sustained by the public voice. To form, then, an enlightened and vigorous public sentiment, which will demand the suppression of these licensed nurseries of intemperance, is a duty to which every good man is bound, and a service in which each may take a share. And not only should the vending of spirits in these impure haunts be discouraged; the vending of them by respectable men should be regarded as a great public evil. The retailer takes shelter under the wholesale dealer, from whom he purchases the pernicious draught: and has he not a right so to do? Can we expect that he should shrink from spreading on a small scale what others spread largely without rebuke? Can we expect his conscience to be sensitive, when he treads in the steps of men of reputation? Of the character of those who vend spirits I do not judge. They grew up in the belief of the innocence of the traffic, and this conviction they may sincerely retain. But error, though sincere, is error still. Right and wrong do not depend on human judgment or human will. Truth and duty may be hidden for ages; but they remain unshaken as God's throne; and when, in the course of his providence, they are made known to one or a few, they must be proclaimed, whoever may be opposed. Truth, truth, is the hope of the world. Let it be spoken in kindness, but with power.

Some of the means of withstanding intemperance have now been stated. Other topics, were there time, I should be glad to offer to your attention. But I must pause. I will only add that every lover of his race has strong encouragement to exert himself for the prevention of intemperance. The striking success of societies instituted for this end should give animation and hope. But even had these associations and these efforts failed,

I should not despair. From the very terribleness of the evil, we may derive incitement and hope in our labours for its suppression. It cannot be that God has created moral beings to become brutes, or placed them in circumstances irresistibly impelling them to this utter renunciation of the proper good of their nature. There are, there must be, means of prevention or cure for this deadliest moral disease. The unhappiness is, that too many of us who call ourselves the friends of temperance, have not virtue and love enough to use powerfully the weapons of the spirit, for the succour of the tempted and fallen. We are ourselves too sensual to rescue others from sensuality. The difference between us and the intemperate man is too small to fit us for his deliverance. But that there are means of withstanding intemperance, that it is the design and tendency of Christianity to raise up men fit and worthy to wield these means, and that there are always some who are prepared to lead the way in this holy work, I cannot doubt. I see, indeed, a terrible energy in human appetites and passions. But I do not faint. Truth is mightier than error; virtue than vice; God than the evil man. In contending earnestly against intemperance we have the help and friendship of Him who is Almighty. We have allies in all that is pure, rational, divine in the human soul, in the progressive intelligence of the age, in whatever elevates public sentiment, in religion, in legislation, in philosophy, in the yearnings of the parent, in the prayers of the Christian, in the teaching of God's house, in the influences of God's Spirit. With these allies, friends, helpers, let good men not despair, but be strong in the faith that, in due time, they shall reap, if they faint not.

WAR.¹

(1838)

IN the following lecture, I shall aim to set forth the chief evil of war, to set forth its great remedy, and then to point out some of the causes of the faint impression made by its woes and crimes.

• Before entering on these topics, I would offer one or two remarks. In speaking as I propose to do, of the evils of war, I have no thought of denying that war has sometimes done good. There is no unmixed evil in the universe. Providence brings good from everything, from fearful sufferings, from atrocious crimes. But sufferings and crimes are not therefore to be set down among our blessings. Murder sometimes cuts short the life and triumphs of a monster of guilt. Robbery may throw into circulation the useless hoards of a miser. Despotism may subdue an all-wasting anarchy. But we do not, therefore, canonize despotism, robbery, and murder. In fierce ages, when common life is made up of violence and borders on bloodshed, when piracy is an honourable trade, and a stranger is a foe, war, by accumulating force in the hands of an able chieftain, may gather many petty tribes under one iron will, and thus a State may be founded, and its rude organization may prove a germ of social order. In later times, war may carry into less civilized regions the influences, knowledge, arts, and religion of more cultivated nations.

¹ This Lecture was delivered early in 1838, and afterwards published with a Preface. Dr. Channing had previously discoursed on the evils of war in 1816 and 1835.

Above all, war may call forth, in those whom it assails, an indignant patriotism, a fervent public spirit, a generous daring, and heroic sacrifices, which testify to the inborn greatness of human nature; just as great vices, by the horror with which they thrill us, and by the reaction they awaken, often give strength to the moral sentiments of a community. These, however, are the incidental influences of war. Its necessary fruits are crime and woe. To enthrone force above right is its essential character; and order, freedom, civilization, are its natural prey. Besides, the benefits of war, such as they are, belong to unrefined ages, when the passions, if not expended in public conflicts, would break out in worse forms of rapine and lust, and when one nation can act on another only by violence. Society, in its present stage, stands in need of war no more than of the ordeal, the rack, the inquisition, the baronial license of the middle ages. All these monuments and ministers of barbarism should be buried in one grave.

(1.) I now proceed to consider, first, as I proposed, the chief evil of war. The chief evil of war! What is it? What induces us to place war at the head of human calamities? In replying to these questions, I shall not direct you to the physical sufferings of war, however great or terrible. Death in its most agonizing forms; the overthrow of proud cities; the devastation of fruitful fields; the impoverishing of nations; famine; pestilence; these form the train of victorious war. But these are not the distinguishing evils of war. These are inflictions of other causes much more than of war. Other causes are wasting human life and joy more than battles. Millions, indeed, die by the sword; but these millions are as nothing, compared with the countless multitudes who die by slow and painful disease. Cities are overthrown by earthquakes as well as by armies, and more frequently swept by accidental conflagrations than by names of war. Hostile bands ravage the fields;

but how much oftener do whirlwinds, storms, hurricanes rush over land and sea, prostrating harvests, and destroying the labours of years, on a scale so vast as to reduce human devastations to a narrow extent! The truth is, that man is surrounded with mighty powers of nature which he cannot comprehend or withstand; and, amidst their beneficent operations, all of them inflict much suffering. What distinguishes war is, not that man is slain, but that he is slain, spoiled, crushed by the cruelty, the injustice, the treachery, the murderous hand of man. The evil is Moral evil. War is the concentration of all human crimes. Here is its distinguishing, accursed brand. Under its standard gather violence, malignity, rage, fraud, perfidy, rapacity, and lust. If it only slew men it would do little. It turns man into a beast of prey. Here is the evil of war, that man, made to be the brother, becomes the deadly foe of his kind; that man, whose duty it is to mitigate suffering, makes the infliction of suffering his study and end; that man, whose office it is to avert and heal the wounds which come from nature's powers, makes researches into nature's laws, and arms himself with her most awful forces, that he may become the destroyer of his race. Nor is this all. There is also found in war a cold-hearted indifference to human miseries and wrongs, perhaps more shocking than the bad passions it calls forth. To my mind, this contempt of human nature is singularly offensive. To hate expresses something like respect. But in war man treats his brother as nothing worth; sweeps away human multitudes as insects; tramples them down as grass; mocks at their rights; and does not deign a thought to their woes.

These remarks show us the great evil of war. It is moral evil. The field of battle is a theatre, got up at immense cost, for the exhibition of crime on a grand scale. There the hell within the human breast blazes

out fiercely and without disguise. A more fearful hell in any region of the universe cannot well be conceived. There the fiends hold their revels and spread their fury.

To many, the physical evils of war are more striking than moral. The outward impresses multitudes more than the inward. It is because they cannot look inward, because they are too earthly and sensual to see and comprehend the deformity of a selfish, unjust, malignant soul. The outward evils of life are emblems of the inward, and are light when severed from these. The saddest view of war is, that it is the breaking out of the human heart, revealing there what is more awful than the miseries which it inflicts. The death-groan is fearful; but how much more appalling the spirit of murder which extorts it!

Suppose two multitudes of men, each composed of thousands, meeting from different countries, but meeting not to destroy but to consult and labour for the good of the race; and suppose them, in the midst of their deliberations, to be smitten suddenly by some mysterious visitation of God, and their labours to be terminated by immediate death. We should be awe-struck by this strange, sudden, widespread ruin. But reflection would teach us that this simultaneous extinction of life in so many of our race was but an anticipation or peculiar fulfilment of the sentence passed on all mankind; and a tender reverence would spring up as we should think of so many generous men coming together from so many different regions, in the spirit of human brotherhood, to be wrapped in one pall, to sleep in one grave. We should erect a monument on the solemn spot; but chiefly to commemorate the holy purpose which had gathered them from their scattered abodes; and we should write on it, 'To the memory of a glorious company, suddenly taken from God's ministry on earth, to enter again (a blessed brotherhood) on a higher ministry in heaven.' Here

you have death sweeping away hosts in a moment. But how different from death in a field of battle, where man meets man as a foe, where the countenance flashes rage and the arm is nerved for slaughter, where brother hews down brother, and where thousands are sent unprepared, in the moment of crime, to give their account! When nature's laws, fulfilling the mysterious will of God, inflict death on the good, we bow, we adore, we give thanks. How different is death from the murderous hand of man!

Allow me to make another supposition, which may bring out still more strongly the truth on which I now insist, that the great evil of war is inward, moral; that its physical woes, terrible as they may be, are light by the side of this. Suppose, then, that in travelling through a solitary region, you should catch the glimpse of a distant dwelling. You approach it eagerly, in the hope of hearing a welcome after your weary journey. As you draw nigh, an ominous stillness damps your hope; and on entering, you see the inmates of the house, a numerous family, stretched out motionless and without life. A wasting pestilence has in one day made their dwelling a common tomb. At first you are thrilled with horror by the sight; but as you survey the silent forms, you see on all their countenances, amidst traces of suffering, an expression of benignity. You see some of the dead lying side by side, with hands mutually entwined, showing that the last action of life was a grasp of affection; whilst some lie locked in one another's arms. The mother's cold lips are still pressed to the cheek of the child, and the child's arms still wind round the neck of the mother. In the forms of others, you see no ambiguous proof that the spirit took its flight in the act of prayer. As you look on these signs of love and faith, stronger than the last agony, what a new feeling steals over you! Your horror subsides. Your eyes are suffused with tears, not of anguish, but

of sympathy, affection, tender reverence. You feel the spot to be consecrated. Death becomes lovely, like the sleep of infancy. You say, Blessed family, Death hath not divided you!

With soothed and respectful sorrow, you leave this resting-place of the good, and another dwelling, dimly described in the horizon, invites your steps. As you approach it, the same stillness is an augury of a like desolation, and you enter it, expecting to see another family laid low by the same mysterious disease. But you open the door, and the spectacle freezes your blood, and chains your steps to the threshold. On every face you see the distortion of rage. Every man's hand grasps a deadly weapon; every breast is gored with wounds. Here lies one, rived asunder by a sword. There two are locked together, but in the death-grapple of hatred, not the embrace of love. Here lies woman, trampled on and polluted, and there the child, weltering in his own blood. You recoil with horror, as soon as the sickness of the heart will suffer you to move. The deadly steam of the apartment oppresses, overpowers you, as if it were the suffocating air of hell. You are terror-struck, as if through the opening earth you had sunk into the abode of fiends; and when the time for reflection comes, and you recall the blessed habitation you had just before left, what a conviction rushes on you, that nothing deserves the name of woe, but that which crime inflicts! You feel that there is a sweetness, loveliness, sacredness in suffering and death, when these are pervaded by holy affections; and that infinite wretchedness and despair gather over these, when springing from unholy passion, when bearing the brand of crime.

In these remarks I do not mean to deny that the physical sufferings of war are great, and should incite us to labour for its abolition. But sufferings, separate from crime, coming not through man's wickedness, but from the laws of nature, are not unmingled evils. They

have a ministry of love. God has ordained them, that they should bind men to one another, that they should touch and soften the human heart, that they should call forth mutual aid, solace, gratitude, and self-forgetting love. Sorrow is the chief cement of souls. Death, coming in the order of nature, gathers round the sufferer sympathizing, anxious friends, who watch day and night, with suffused eyes and heart-breathed prayer, to avert or mitigate the last agonies. It calls up tender recollections, inspires solemn thought, rebukes human pride, obscures the world's glories, and speaks of immortality. From the still death-bed, what softening, subduing, chastening, exalting influences proceed ! But death in war, death from the hand of man, sears the heart and conscience, kills human sympathies, and scatters the thought of judgment to come. Man dying in battle, unsolaced, unpitied, and a victim to hatred, rapacity, and insatiable ambition, leaves behind him wrongs to be revenged. His blood does not speak peace or speak of heaven ; but sends forth a maddening cry, and exasperates survivors to new struggles.

Thus war adds to suffering the unutterable weight of crime, and defeats the holy and blessed ministry which all suffering is intended to fulfil. When I look back on the ages of conflict through which the race has passed, what most moves me is not the awful amount of suffering which war has inflicted. This may be borne. The terrible thought is, that this has been the work of crime ; that men, whose great law is love, have been one another's butchers ; that God's children have stained his beautiful earth, made beautiful for their home, with one another's blood : that the shriek, which comes to us from all regions and ages, has been extorted by human cruelty ; that man has been a demon, and has turned earth into hell. All else may be borne. It is this, which makes history so horrible a record to the benevolent mind.

(2.) I have now set before you what I deem the chief evil of war. It is moral evil. And from these views you will easily judge what I regard as the true remedy of war, as the means of removing it, which above all others we should employ. If the most terrible view of war be that it is the triumph of selfish and malignant passions, then its true cure is to be sought in the diffusion of the principles of universal justice and love, in that spirit of Jesus Christ which expels the demons of selfishness and malignity from the heart. Even supposing that war could be abolished by processes which leave the human character unchanged, that it could be terminated by the progress of a civilization which, whilst softening manners, would not diminish the selfishness, mercenariness, hard-heartedness, fraud, ambition of men, its worst evils would still remain, and society would reap in some other forms the fruits of its guilt. God has ordained that the wickedness within us shall always find its expression and punishment in outward evil. War is nothing more than a reflection or image of the soul. It is the fiend within coming out. Human history is nothing more than the inward nature manifested in its native acts and issues. Let the soul continue unchanged; and should war cease, the inward plague would still find its way to the surface. The infernal fire at the centre of our being, though it should not break forth in the wasting volcano, would not slumber, but by other eruptions, more insensible yet not less deadly, would lay waste human happiness. I do not believe, however, that any remedy but the Christian spirit can avail against war. The wild beast, that has gorged on millions of victims in every age, is not to be tamed by a polished or selfish civilization. Selfishness, however drilled into courtesy, always tends to strife. Man, as long as possessed by it, will sacrifice others to his own interest and glory, and will grow angry and fierce when others stand in his way.

War will never yield but to the principles of universal justice and love, and these have no sure root but in the religion of Jesus Christ. Christianity is the true remedy for war, not Christianity in name, not such Christianity as we see, not such as has grown up under arbitrary governments in church and state ; not such as characterizes any Christian sect at the present day, but Christianity as it lived in the soul and came forth in the life of its Founder : a religion that reveals man as the object of God's infinite love, and which commends him to the unbounded love of his brethren ; a religion, the essence of which is self-denial, self-sacrifice, in the cause of human nature, a religion which proscribes as among the worst sins, the passion of man for rule and dominion over his fellow-creatures ; which knows nothing of rich or poor, high or low, bond or free, and casts down all the walls of partition which sever men from one another's sympathy and respect.

Christian love alone can supplant war ; and this love is not a mere emotion, a tenderness awakened by human suffering, but an intelligent, moral, spiritual love, a perception and deep feeling of the sacredness of human nature, a recognition of the inalienable rights, the solemn claims of every human being. It protests fearlessly against all wrong, no matter how obscure the victim. It desires to lift up each and all, no matter how fallen. It is a sympathy with the spiritual principle dwelling under every human form. This is the love which is to conquer war ; and as yet this has been but little diffused. The Quakers indeed have protested against war as unchristian, but have done little towards bringing into clear light, and sending forth with new power, the spirit to which war is to yield. Cutting themselves off by outward peculiarities from the community, secluding themselves from ordinary intercourse through fear of moral infection, living almost as a separate race, they have been little felt in

society; they have done little to awaken that deep religious interest in man as man, that sensibility to his rights, that hatred of all wrong, that thirst for the elevation of every human being, in which Christian love finds its truest manifestation. Every sect has as yet been too imbued with the spirit of sects, and has inherited too largely the exclusiveness of past ages, to understand or spread the true spirit of human brotherhood. The love which Christ breathes, which looks through man's body to the immortal spirit, which sees something divine in the rational and moral powers of the lowest human being, and which challenges for the lowest the sympathy, respect, and fostering aid of his race; this has been rare, and yet it is only by the gradual diffusion of this that the plague of war can be stayed. This reverence for humanity, could it even prevail through a narrow sphere, could it bind together but a small body of men, would send forth a testimony against war, which would break the slumber of the Christian world, and which would strike awe into many a contemner of his race.

I am aware that others are hoping for the abolition of war by other causes; and other causes, I am aware, must be brought into action. I only say that, unless joined with the spirit of Christianity, they give no assurance of continued repose. This thought I would briefly illustrate.

The present unusual cessation of arms in the Christian world is to some a promise of a happier era in human affairs. It is indeed a cheering fact, and may well surprise us, when we consider how many causes of war have been in action, how many threatening clouds have overcast the political sky, during the pause of war. But if we examine the causes of this tranquility, we shall learn not to confide in it too strongly.

The first cause was the exhaustion in which Europe was left by the bloody conflicts of the French Revolu-

tion. The nations, worn out with struggles, wasted by successive invasions, and staggering under an unprecedented load of debt, yearned for repose. The strong man had bled too freely to fight more. For years poverty has kept the peace in Europe. One of the fruits of civilization is the increasing expensiveness of war, so that when the voice of humanity cannot be heard, the hollow sound of an empty treasury is a warning which cannot be slighted. This cause of peace is evidently temporary. Nations, resting from exhaustion, may be expected to renew their pernicious activity when their strength is renewed.

Another cause of the continuance of peace is undoubtedly the extension of new and profitable relations through the civilized world. Since the pacification of Europe, in 1816, a new impulse has been given to industry. The discoveries of science have been applied with wonderful success to the useful arts. Nations have begun in earnest to develop their resources. Labour is discovered to be the grand conqueror, enriching and building up nations more surely than the proudest battles. As a necessary result of this new impulse, commerce has been wonderfully enlarged. Nations send the products of their soil and machinery, where once they sent armies; and such a web of common interests has been woven that hostilities can spring up in no corner of the civilized world without deranging in a measure the order and industry of every other state. Undoubtedly we have here a promise of peace; but let us not be too sanguine. We have just begun this career, and we know not its end. Let wealth grow without a corresponding growth of the temperate, just, and benevolent spirit of Christianity, and I see few auguries but of evil. Wealth breeds power, and power always tempts to wrong. Communities, which at once grow rich and licentious, breed desperate men, unprincipled adventurers, restless spirits, who unsettle

social order at home, who make freedom a cloak and instrument of ambition, and find an interest in embroiling their country with foreign foes. Another consequence of growing prosperity is the rapid growth of population; and this, in the absence of Christian restraints and Christian principles, tends to pauperism and crime, tends to make men cheap, and to destroy the sacredness of human life; and communities are tempted to throw off this dangerous load, this excess of numbers, in foreign war. In truth, the vices which fester in the bosom of a prosperous, licentious, over-peopled state, are hardly less fearful than those of war, and they naturally seek and find their punishment in this awful calamity. Let us not speak of industry, commerce, and wealth as insuring peace. Is commerce never jealous and grasping? Have commercial states no collisions? Have commercial rights never drawn the sword in self-defence? Are not such states a tempting prey? And have they no desire to prey on others? Does trade cherish nothing analogous to the spirit of war in ordinary pursuits? Is there no fighting on the exchange? Is bargaining nothing but friendship and peace? Why then expect from trade alone peace among nations? Nothing, nothing can bind nations together but Christian justice and love. I insist on this the more earnestly, because it is the fashion now to trust for every good to commerce, industry, and the wonderful inventions which promise indefinite increase of wealth. But to improve man's outward condition is not to improve man himself, and this is the sole ground of hope. With all our ingenuity, we can frame no machinery for manufacturing wisdom, virtue, peace, Railroads and steamboats cannot speed the soul to its perfection. This must come, if it come at all, from each man's action on himself, from putting forth our power on the soul and not over nature, from a sense of inward not outward miseries, from 'hunger and thirst

after righteousness,' not after wealth. I should rejoice, like the prophet, 'to bring glad tidings, to publish peace.' But I do fear that, without some great spiritual revolution, without some new life and love breathed into the church, without some deep social reforms, men will turn against each other their new accumulations of power; that their wealth and boasted inventions will be converted into weapons of destruction; that the growing prosperity of nations will become the nutriment of more wasteful wars, will become fuel for more devouring fires of ambition or revenge.

Another cause of the recent long cessation of foreign wars has been the dread of internal convulsions, of civil wars. The spirit of revolution has, more or less, penetrated the whole civilized world. The grand idea of human Rights has found its way even into despotisms. Kings have less confidence in their subjects and soldiers. They have felt their thrones totter, and have felt that a disastrous war would expose them to a force more terrible than that of victorious foes—the force of burning discontent, exasperated opinion at home. It is understood that the next general war will be a war not of nations but of principles, that absolutism must measure swords with liberalism, despotism with free constitutions; and from this terrible encounter both parties recoil. We indeed believe that, with or without war, liberal principles and institutions are destined to advance, to make the conquest of Europe; and it is thought that these, being recognitions of human rights, will be less prodigal of human blood than absolute power. But can we hope that these, unsanctioned, unsustained by the Christian spirit, will ensure peace? What teaches our own experience? Because free, have we no wars? What, indeed, is the free spirit of which we so much boast? Is it not much more a jealousy of our own rights than a reverence for the rights of all? Does it not consist with the inflictions of gross wrongs?

Does it not spoil the Indian? Does it not enslave the African? Is it not anxious to spread bondage over new regions? Who can look on this free country, distracted by parties, rent by local jealousies, in some districts administering justice by mobs, and silencing speech and the press by conflagration and bloodshed, who can see this free country, and say that liberal opinions and institutions are of themselves to banish war? Nowhere are the just, impartial, disinterested principles of Christianity so much needed as in a free state. Nowhere are there more elements of strife to be composed, more passions to be curbed, more threatened wrongs to be repressed. Freedom has its perils as well as inestimable blessings. In loosening outward restraints, it demands that justice and love be enthroned within man's soul. Without Christian principle, freedom may swell the tide of tumult and war.

One other cause will probably be assigned by some for the long cessation of hostilities in the civilized world, and that is the greater success of statesmen in securing that long-sought good among nations, the balance of power. Be it so. But how soon may this balance be disturbed? How does it tremble now? Europe has long been threatened by the disproportionate growth of Russia. In the north of Europe is silently growing up a power which, many fear, is one day to grasp at universal empire. The south, it is said, is to fulfil its old destiny, that is to fall a prey to the north. All Europe is interested in setting bounds to this half-civilized despotism. But the great absolute powers, Prussia and Austria, dreading more the progress of liberal opinions than of Russian hordes, may rather throw themselves into her scale, and be found fighting with her the battles of legitimacy against free institutions. It is true that many wise men dismiss these fears as vain, and believe that the ill-cemented union of the provinces, or rather nations, which compose the

colossal empire of the north, cannot endure, or at least will admit no steady prosecution of schemes of domination. I presume not to read the future. My single object is to show the uncertainty of all means of abolishing war, unless joined with and governed by the spreading spirit of our disinterested faith. No calculations of interest, no schemes of policy, can do the work of love, of the spirit of human brotherhood. There can be no peace without, but through peace within. Society must be an expression of the souls of its members. Man's character moulds his outward lot. His destiny is woven by the good or evil principles which bear rule in his breast. I indeed attach importance to all the causes of peace which I have now stated. They are far from powerless; but their power will be spent in vain unless aided by mightier and diviner energy, by the force of moral and religious principles, the strength of disinterested love.

(3.) I have now considered the great evil of war, and the great remedy of this scourge of nations, and I proceed, as proposed, to point out some causes of that insensibility to its evils, so common in the world, and so common even among those from whom better things might be hoped; and this I do, not to gratify a love of speculation, but in the belief that this insensibility will be resisted and overcome, in proportion as its sources shall be explained.

Among its chief causes, one undoubtedly is the commonness of war. This hardens us to its evils. Its horrors are too familiar to move us, unless they start up at our own door. How much more would they appal us were they rare? If the history of the race were, with one solitary exception, a history of peace, concord, brotherly love; if but one battle had been fought in the long succession of ages; if from the bosom of profound tranquility two armies on one fatal day had sprung forth and rushed together for mutual destruction; if

but one spot on earth had been drenched with human blood, shed by human hands, how different would be our apprehensions of war! What a fearful interest would gather round that spot! How would it remain deserted, dreaded, abhorred! With what terrible distinctness would the leaders of those armies stand out as monsters, not men! How should we confound them with Moloch, and the fiercest fallen spirits! Should we not feel as if on that mysterious day the blessed influences of Heaven had been intercepted, and a demoniacal frenzy had been let loose on the race? And has war, in becoming common, lost its horrors? Is it less terrible because its Molochs crowd every page of history, and its woes and crimes darken all nations and all times? Do base or ferocious passions less degrade and destroy because their victims are unnumbered? If, indeed, the evils of war were only physical, and were inevitable, we should do well to resign ourselves to that kindly power of habit which takes the edge from oft-repeated pains. But moral evils, evils which may and ought to be shunned, which have their spring in human will, which our higher powers are given us to overcome, these it is a crime unresistingly to endure. The frequency and strength of these are more urgent reasons for abhorring and withstanding them. Reflection should be summoned to resist the paralyzing power of habit. From principle we should cherish a deeper horror of war, because its 'sword devours for ever.'

I proceed to a second cause of insensibility to the evils of war, and one of immense power. I refer to the common and almost universal belief that the right of war belongs to civil government. Let us be just to human nature. The idea of 'Right' has always mixed itself with war, and this has kept out of view the real character of most of the conflicts of nations. The sovereign, regarding the right of war as an essential attribute of sovereignty, has on this ground ascribed a

legitimacy to all national hostilities, and has never dreamed that in most of his wars he was a murderer. So the subject has thought himself bound to obey his sovereign, and, on this ground, has acquitted himself of crime, has perhaps imputed to himself merit, in fighting and slaughtering for the defence of the most iniquitous claims. Here lies the delusion, which we should be most anxious to remove. It is the legality ascribed to war, on account of its being waged by government, which produces insensibility to its horrors and crimes. When a notorious robber, seized by Alexander, asked the conqueror of the world whether he was not a greater robber than himself, the spirit of the hero repelled the title with indignation. And why so? Had he not, without provocation and cause, spoiled cities and realms, whilst the robber had only plundered individuals and single dwellings? Had he not slaughtered ten thousand innocent fellow-creatures for one victim who had fallen under the robber's knife? And why, then, did the arch-robber disclaim the name, and seriously believe that he could not justly be confounded with ruffians? Because he was a king, the head of a state, and as such authorized to make war. Here was the shelter for his conscience and his fame. Had the robber, after addressing his question to Alexander, turned to the Macedonian soldier, and said to him, 'Are you not, too, a greater robber than I? Have not your hands been busier in pillage? Are they not dyed more deeply in innocent blood?' The unconscious soldier, like his master, would have repelled the title; and why? 'I am a subject,' he would have replied, 'and bound to obey my sovereign; and, in fulfilling a duty, I cannot be sunk to the level of the most hated criminal.' Thus king and subject take refuge in the right of war which inheres in sovereignty, and thus the most terrible crimes are perpetrated with little reproach.

I need not tell you that there are Christians, who, to strip war of this pretext or extenuation, deny that this right exists; who teach that Jesus Christ has wrested the sword from the magistrate as truly as from the private man. On this point I shall not now enter. I believe that more good may be done in the present instance by allowing to government the right of war. I still maintain that most wars bring the guilt of murder on the government by whom they are declared, and on the soldier by whom they are carried on, so that our sensibility ought in no degree to be impaired by the legitimacy of national hostilities.

I will allow that government has the right of war. But a right has bounds, and when these are transgressed by us, it ceases to exist; and we are as culpable as if it had never existed. The private citizen, it is generally acknowledged, has the right of taking life in self-defence; but if, under plea of this right, he should take life without cause, he would not stand absolved of murder. In like manner, though government be authorized to make war in self-defence, it still contracts the guilt of murder if it proclaim war from policy, ambition, or revenge.

By the Constitution of this country, various rights are conferred on Congress for the public good; and should they extend these rights beyond the limits prescribed by the national charter, for purposes of cruelty, rapacity, and arbitrary power, they would be as treacherous, as criminal, as if they had laid claim to unconceded rights. Now, stricter bounds are set to the right of war than those which the Constitution has prescribed to the rulers. A higher authority than man's defines this terrible prerogative. Woe! woe to him who impatiently, selfishly spurns the restraints of God, and who winks out of sight the crime of sending forth the sword to destroy, because as a sovereign he has the right of war.

From its very nature, this right should be exercised

above all others anxiously, deliberately, fearfully. It is the right of passing sentence of death on thousands of our fellow-creatures. If any action on earth ought to be performed with trembling, with deep prostration before God, with the most solemn inquisition into motives, with the most reverent consultation of conscience, it is a declaration of war. This stands alone among acts of legislation. It has no parallel. These few words, 'Let war be,' have the power of desolation which belongs to earthquakes and lightnings; they may stain the remotest seas with blood; may wake the echoes of another hemisphere with the thunders of artillery; may carry anguish into a thousand human abodes. No scheme of aggrandizement, no doubtful claims, no uncertain fears, no anxiety to establish a balance of power, will justify this act. It can find no justification but in plain, stern necessity, in unquestionable justice, in persevering wrongs, which all other and long-tried means have failed to avert. Terrible is the responsibility, beyond that of all others, which falls on him who involves nations in war. He has no excuse for rashness, passion, or private ends. He ought at such a moment to forget, to annihilate himself. The spirit of God and justice should alone speak and act through him. To commit this act rashly, passionately, selfishly, is to bring on himself the damnation of a thousand murders. An act of legislation, commanding fifty thousand men to be assembled on yonder common, there to be shot, stabbed, trampled under horses' feet, until their shrieks and agonies should end in death, would thrill us with horror; and such an act is a declaration of war; and a government which can perform it, without the most solemn sense of responsibility and the clearest admonitions of duty, deserves, in expiation of its crime, to endure the whole amount of torture which it has inflicted on its fellow-creatures.

I have said, a declaration of war stands alone. There,

is one act which approaches it, and which indeed is the very precedent on which it is founded. I refer to the signing of a death-warrant by a chief magistrate. In this case, how anxious is society that the guilty only should suffer ! The offender is first tried by his peers, and allowed the benefit of skilful counsel. The laws are expounded and the evidence weighed by learned and upright judges ; and when, after these protections of innocence, the unhappy man is convicted, he is still allowed to appeal for mercy to the highest authority of the State, and to enforce his own cry by solicitations of friends and the people ; and when all means of averting his doom fail, religion, through her ministers, enters his cell, to do what yet can be done for human nature in its most fallen, miserable state. Society does not cast from its bosom its most unworthy member without reluctance, without grief, without fear of doing wrong, without care for his happiness. But wars, by which thousands of the unoffending and worthiest perish, are continually proclaimed by rulers, in madness, through ambition, through infernal policy, from motives which should rank them with the captains of pirate-ships, or leaders of banditti.

It is time that the right of war should not shield governments from the infamy due to hostilities, to which selfish, wicked passions give birth. Let rulers learn that, for this right, they are held to a fearful responsibility. Let a war, not founded in plain justice and necessity, never be named but as Murder. Let the Christian give articulate voice to the blood that cries from the earth against rulers by whom it has been criminally shed. Let no soft terms be used. On this subject a new moral sense and a new language are needed throughout the whole civilized and Christian world ; and just in proportion as the truth shall find a tongue, war will cease.

But the right of war, which is said to belong to sovereignty, not only keeps out of sight the enormous

guilt of rulers in almost all national conflicts. It also hides or extenuates the frequent guilt of subjects in taking part in the hostilities which their rulers declare. In this way, much of the prevalent insensibility to the evils of war is induced, and perhaps on no point is light more needed. The ferocity and cruelty of armies impress us little, because we look on them as doing a work of duty. The subject or citizen, as we think, is bound to obey his rulers. In his worst deeds as a soldier he is discharging his obligations to the State; and thus murder and pillage, covered with a cloak of duty, excite no deep, unaffected reprobation and horror.

I know it will be asked, 'And is not the citizen bound to fight at the call of his government? Does not his commission absolve him from the charge of murder or enormous crime? Is not obedience to the sovereign power the very foundation on which society rests?' I answer, 'Has the duty of obeying government no bounds? Is the human sovereign a God? Is his sovereignty absolute? If he command you to slay a parent, must you obey? If he forbid you to worship God, must you obey? Have you no right to judge his acts? Have you no self-direction? Is there no unchangeable right which the ruler cannot touch? Is there no higher standard than human law?' These questions answer themselves. A declaration of war cannot sanction wrong, or turn murder into a virtuous deed. Undoubtedly, as a general rule, the citizen is bound to obey the authorities under which he lives. No difference of opinion as to the mere expediency of measures will warrant opposition. Even in cases of doubtful right he may submit his judgment to the law. But when called to do what his conscience clearly pronounces wrong, he must not waver. No outward law is so sacred as the voice of God in his own breast. He cannot devolve on rulers an act so solemn as the

destruction of fellow-beings convicted of no offence. For no act will more solemn inquisition be made at the bar of God.

I maintain that the citizen, before fighting, is bound to inquire into the justice of the cause which he is called to maintain with blood, and bound to withhold his hand if his conscience condemn the cause. On this point he is able to judge. No political question, indeed, can be determined so easily as this of war. War can be justified only by plain, palpable necessity; by unquestionable wrongs, which, as patient trial has proved, can in no other way be redressed; by the obstinate, persevering invasion of solemn and unquestionable rights. The justice of war is not a mystery for cabinets to solve. It is not a state-secret which he must take on trust. It lies within our reach. We are bound to examine it.

We are especially bound to this examination, because there is always a presumption against the justice of war; always reason to fear that it is condemned by impartial conscience and God. This solemn truth has peculiar claims on attention. It takes away the plea that we may innocently fight, because our rulers have decreed war. It strips off the most specious disguise from the horrors and crimes of national hostilities. If hostilities were, as a general rule, necessary and just, if an unjust war were a solitary exception, then the citizen might extenuate his share in the atrocities of military life, by urging his obligation to the state. But if there is always reason to apprehend the existence of wrong on the part of rulers, then he is bound to pause and ponder well his path. Then he advances at his peril, and must answer for the crimes of the unjust, unnecessary wars in which he shares.

The presumption is always against the justice and necessity of war. This we learn from the spirit of all rulers and nations towards foreign states. It is partial, unjust. Individuals may be disinterested; but nations

have no feeling of the tie of brotherhood to their race. A base selfishness is the principle on which the affairs of nations are commonly conducted. A statesman is expected to take advantage of the weaknesses and wants of other countries. How loose a morality governs the intercourse of states! What falsehoods and intrigues are licensed diplomacy! What nation regards another with true friendship? What nation makes sacrifices to another's good? What nation is as anxious to perform its duties as to assert its rights? What nation chooses to suffer wrong rather than to inflict it? What nation lays down the everlasting law of right, casts itself fearlessly on its principles, and chooses to be poor or to perish rather than to do wrong? Can communities so selfish, so unfriendly, so unprincipled, so unjust, be expected to wage righteous wars? Especially if with this selfishness are joined national prejudices, antipathies, and exasperated passions, what else can be expected in the public policy but inhumanity and crime? An individual, we know, cannot be trusted in his own cause, to measure his own claims, to avenge his own wrongs; and the civil magistrate, an impartial umpire, has been substituted as the only means of justice. But nations are even more unfit than individuals to judge in their own cause; more prone to push their rights to excess, and to trample on the rights of others; because nations are crowds, and crowds are unawed by opinion, and more easily inflamed by sympathy into madness. Is there not, then, always a presumption against the justice of war?

This presumption is increased, when we consider the false notions of patriotism and honour which prevail in nations. Men think it a virtuous patriotism to throw a mantle, as they call it, over their country's infirmities, to wink at her errors, to assert her most doubtful rights, to look jealously and angrily on the prosperity of rival states; and they place her honour not in unflinching

adherence to the right, but in a fiery spirit, in quick resentment, in martial courage, and especially in victory ; and can a good man hold himself bound and stand prepared to engage in war at the dictate of such a state ?

The citizen or subject, you say, may innocently fight at the call of his rulers ; and I ask, who are his rulers ? Perhaps an absolute sovereign, looking down on his people as another race, as created to toil for his pleasure, to fight for new provinces to bleed for his renown. There are, indeed, republican governments. But were not the republics of antiquity as greedy of conquest, as prodigal of human life, as steeled against the cries of humanity, as any despots who ever lived ? And if we come down to modern republics, are they to be trusted with our consciences ? What does the Congress of these United States represent ? Not so much the virtue of the country as a vicious principle, the spirit of party. It acts not so much for the people as for parties ; and are parties upright ? Are parties merciful ? Are the wars, to which party commits a country, generally just ?

Unhappily, public men under all governments are of all moral guides the most unsafe, the last for a Christian to follow. Public life is thought to absolve men from the strict obligations of truth and justice. To wrong an adverse party or another country, is not reprobated as are wrongs in private life. Thus duty is dethroned ; thus the majesty of virtue insulted in the administration of nations. Public men are expected to think more of their own elevation than of their country. Is the city of Washington the most virtuous spot in this republic ? Is it the school of incorruptible men ? The hall of Congress, disgraced by so many brawl, swayed by local interest and party intrigues, in which the right of petition is trodder under foot, is this the oracle from which the responses of justice come forth ? Public

bodies want conscience. Men acting in masses shift off responsibility on one another. Multitudes never blush. If these things be true, then I maintain that the Christian has not a right to take part in war blindly, confidently, at the call of his rulers. To shed the blood of fellow-creatures is too solemn a work to be engaged in lightly. Let him not put himself, a tool, into wicked hands. Let him not meet on the field his brother man, his brother Christian, in a cause on which Heaven frowns. Let him bear witness against unholy wars, as his country's greatest crimes. If called to take part in them, let him deliberately refuse. If martial law seize on him, let him submit. If hurried to prison, let him submit. If brought thence to be shot, let him submit. There must be martyrs to peace as truly as to other principles of our religion. The first Christians chose to die rather than obey the laws of the state which commanded them to renounce their Lord. 'Death rather than crime;' such is the good man's watchword, such the Christian's vow. Let him be faithful unto death.

Undoubtedly it will be objected that, if one law of the state may in any way be resisted, then all may be, and so government must fall. This is precisely the argument on which the doctrine of passive obedience to the worst tyrannies rests. The absolutist says, 'If one government may be overturned, none can stand. Your right of revolution is nothing but the right of anarchy, of universal misrule.' The reply is in both instances the same. Extreme cases speak for themselves. We must put confidence in the common-sense of men, and suppose them capable of distinguishing between reasonable laws and those which require them to commit manifest crimes. The objection which we are considering rests on the supposition that a declaration of war is a common act of legislation, bearing no strong marks of distinction from other laws, and consequently to be

obeyed as implicitly as all. But it is broadly distinguished. A declaration of war sends us forth to destroy our fellow-creatures, to carry fire, sword, famine, bereavement, want, and woe into the fields and habitations of our brethren; whilst Christianity, conscience, and all the pure affections of our nature call us to love our brethren, and to die, if need be, for their good. And from whence comes this declaration of war? From men who would rather die than engage in unjust or unnecessary conflict? Too probably from men to whom Christianity is a name, whose highest law is honour, who are used to avenge their private wrongs and defend their reputations by shedding blood, and who, in public as in private life, defy the laws of God. Whoever, at such men's dictation, engages in war without solemnly consulting conscience and inquiring into the justice of the cause, contracts great guilt; nor can the 'right of war,' which such men claim as rulers, absolve him from the crimes and woes of the conflict in which he shares.

I have thus considered the second cause of the prevalent insensibility to war, namely, the common vague belief that, as the right of war inheres in government, therefore murder and pillage in national conflicts change their nature, or are broadly distinguished from the like crimes in common life. This topic has been so extended that I must pass over many which remain, and can take but a glance at one or two which ought not to be wholly overlooked. I observe, then, thirdly, that men's sensibility to the evil of war has been very much blunted by the deceptive show, the costume, the splendour in which war is arrayed. Its horrors are hidden under its dazzling dress. To the multitude, the senses are more convincing reasoners than the conscience. In youth—the period which so often receives impressions for life—we cannot detect, in the heart-stirring fife and drum, the true music of war—the shriek of the newly wounded or the faint moan of the dying. Arms glitter-

ing in the sunbeam do not remind us of bayonets dripping with blood. To one who reflects, there is something very shocking in these decorations of war. If men must fight, let them wear the badges which become their craft. It would shock us to see a hangman dressed out in scarf and epaulette, and marching with merry music to the place of punishment. The soldier has a sadder work than the hangman. His office is not to despatch occasionally a single criminal; he goes to the slaughter of thousands as free from crime as himself. The sword is worn as an ornament; and yet its use is to pierce the heart of a fellow-creature. As well might the butcher parade before us his knife, or the executioner his axe or halter. Allow war to be necessary, still it is a horrible necessity, a work to fill a good man with anguish of spirit. Shall it be turned into an occasion of pomp and merriment? To dash out men's brains, to stab them to the heart, to cover the body with gashes, to lop off the limbs, to crush men under the hoof of the war-horse, to destroy husbands and fathers, to make widows and orphans, all this may be necessary; but to attire men for this work with fantastic trappings, to surround this fearful occupation with all the circumstances of gaiety and pomp, seems as barbarous as it would be to deck a gallows, or to make a stage for dancing beneath the scaffold. I conceive that the military dress was not open to as much reproach in former times as now. It was then less dazzling, and acted less on the imagination, because it formed less an exception to the habits of the times. The dress of Europe, not many centuries ago, was fashioned very much after what may be called the harlequin style. That is, it affected strong colours and strong contrasts. This taste belongs to rude ages, and has passed away very much with the progress of civilization. The military dress alone has escaped the reform. The military man is the only harlequin left

us from ancient times. It is time that his dazzling finery were gone, that it no longer corrupted the young, that it no longer threw a pernicious glare over his terrible vocation.

I close with assigning what appears to me to be the most powerful cause of the prevalent insensibility to war. It is our blindness to the dignity and claims of human nature. We know not the worth of a man. We know not *who* the victims are on whom war plants its foot, whom the conqueror leaves to the vulture on the field of battle, or carries captive to grace his triumph. Oh! did we know what men are, did we see in them the spiritual, immortal children of God, what a voice should we lift against war! How indignantly, how sorrowfully should we invoke Heaven and earth to right our insulted, injured brethren!

I close with asking 'Must the sword devour for ever?' Must force, fear, pain, always rule the world? Is the kingdom of God, the reign of truth, duty, and love never to prevail? Must the sacred name of brethren be only a name among men? Must the divinity in man's nature never be recognized with veneration? Is the earth always to steam with human blood shed by man's hands, and to echo with groans wrung from hearts which violence has pierced? Can you and I, my friends, do nothing—nothing to impress a different character on the future history of our race? You say we are weak; and why weak? It is from inward defect, not from outward necessity. We are inefficient abroad, because faint within—faint in love, and trust, and holy resolution. Inward power always comes forth, and works without. Noah Worcester enfeebled in body, was not weak. George Fox, poor and uneducated, was not weak. They had light and life within, and therefore were strong abroad. Their spirits were stirred by Christ's truth and spirit; and so moved, they spoke and were heard. We are dead, and

therefore cannot act. Perhaps we speak against war ; but if we speak from tradition, if we echo what we hear, if peace be a cant on our lips, our words are unmeaning air. Our own souls must bleed when our brethren are slaughtered. We must feel the infinite wrong done to man by the brute force which treads him in the dust. We must see in the authors of unjust, selfish, ambitious, revengeful wars, monsters in human form, incarnations of the dread enemy of the human race. Under the inspiration of such feelings, we shall speak, even the humblest of us, with something of prophetic force. This is the power which is to strike awe into the counsellors and perpetrators of now licensed murder ; which is to wither the laurelled brow of now worshipped heroes. Deep moral convictions, unfeigned reverence and fervent love for man, and living faith in Christ, are mightier than armies ; mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of oppression and war. Go forth, then, friends of mankind, peaceful soldiers of Christ ! and in your various relations at home and abroad, in private life, and, if it may be, in more public spheres, give faithful utterance to the principles of universal justice and love, give utterance to your deep, solemn, irreconcilable hatred of the spirit of war.

THE ELEVATION OF THE LABOURING CLASSES.¹

I.

WHAT is to be understood by the elevation of the labouring class? This is our first topic. To prevent misapprehension, I will begin with stating what is *not* meant by it, in what it does not consist.—I say, then, that by the elevation of the labourer, I do not understand that he is to be raised above the need of labour. I do not expect a series of improvements, by which he is to be released from his daily work. Still, more, I have no desire to dismiss him from his workshop and farm, to take the spade and axe from his hand, and to make his life a long holiday. I have faith in labour, and I see the goodness of God in placing us in a world where labour alone can keep us alive. I would not change, if I could, our subjection to physical laws, our exposure to hunger and cold, and the necessity of constant conflicts with the material world. I would not, if I could, so temper the elements, that they should infuse into us only grateful sensations, that they should make vegetation so exuberant as to anticipate every want, and the minerals so ductile as to offer no resistance to our strength and skill. Such a world would make a contemptible race. Man owes his growth, his energy, chiefly to that striving of the will, that conflict with difficulty, which we call Effort. Easy. pleasant

¹ Selected from two Lectures originally delivered to a meeting of young mechanics; published, with additions, February, 1840.

work does not make robust minds, does not give men a consciousness of their powers, does not train them to endurance, to perseverance, to steady force of will, that force without which all other acquisitions avail nothing. Manual labour is a school in which men are placed to get energy of purpose and character—a vastly more important endowment than all the learning of all other schools. They are placed, indeed, under hard masters, physical sufferings and wants, the power of fearful elements, and the vicissitudes of all human things; but these stern teachers do a work which no compassionate, indulgent friend could do for us; and true wisdom will bless Providence for their sharp ministry. I have great faith in hard work. The material world does much for the mind by its beauty and order; but it does more for our minds by the pains it inflicts, by its obstinate resistance, which nothing but patient toil can overcome; by its vast forces, which nothing but unremitting skill and effort can turn to our use; by its perils, which demand continual vigilance; and by its tendencies to decay. I believe that difficulties are more important to the human mind than what we call assistances. Work we all must, if we mean to bring out and perfect our nature. Even if we do not work with the hands, we must undergo equivalent toil in some other direction. No business or study which does not present obstacles, tasking to the full the intellect and the will, is worthy of a man. In science, he who does not grapple with hard questions, who does not concentrate his whole intellect in vigorous attention, who does not aim to penetrate what at first repels him, will never attain to mental force. The uses of toil reach beyond the present world. The capacity of steady, earnest labour is, I apprehend, one of our great preparations for another state of being. When I see the vast amount of toil required of men, I feel that it must have important connections with their future existence; and that he

who has met this discipline manfully, has laid one essential foundation of improvement, exertion, and happiness in the world to come. You will here see that to me labour has great dignity. It is not merely the grand instrument by which the earth is overspread with fruitfulness and beauty, and the ocean subdued, and matter wrought into innumerable forms for comfort and ornament. It has a far higher function, which is to give force to the will, efficiency, courage, the capacity of endurance, and of persevering devotion to far-reaching plans. Alas, for the man who has not learned to work ! He is a poor creature. He does not know himself. He depends on others, with no capacity of making returns for the support they give ; and let him not fancy that he has a monopoly of enjoyment. Ease, rest, owes its deliciousness to toil ; and no toil is so burdensome as the rest of him who has nothing to task and quicken his powers.

I do not, then, desire to release the labourer from toil. This is not the elevation to be sought for him. Manual labour is a great good ; but, in so saying, I must be understood to speak of labour in its just proportions. In excess, it does great harm. It is not a good, when made the sole work of life. It must be joined with higher means of improvement, or it degrades instead of exalting. Man has a various nature, which requires a variety of occupation and discipline for its growth. Study, meditation, society, and relaxation should be mixed up with his physical toils. He has intellect, heart, imagination, taste, as well as bones and muscles ; and he is grievously wronged when compelled to exclusive drudgery for bodily subsistence. Life should be an alternation of employments, so diversified as to call the whole man into action. Unhappily, our present civilization is far from realizing this idea. It tends to increase the amount of manual toil, at the very time that it renders this toil less favourable to the culture of

the mind. The division of labour, which distinguishes civilized from savage life, and to which we owe chiefly the perfection of the arts, tends to dwarf the intellectual powers, by confining the activity of the individual to a narrow range, to a few details, perhaps to the heading of pins, the pointing of nails, or the tying together of broken strings; so that while the savage has his faculties sharpened by various occupations, and by exposure to various perils, the civilized man treads a monotonous, stupefying round of unthinking toil. This cannot, must not, always be. Variety of action, corresponding to the variety of human powers, and fitted to develop all, is the most important element of human civilization. It should be the aim of philanthropists. In proportion as Christianity shall spread the spirit of brotherhood, there will and must be a more equal distribution of toils and means of improvement. That system of labour which saps the health, and shortens life, and famishes intellect, needs, and must receive, great modification. Still, labour in due proportion is an important part of our present lot. It is the condition of all outward comforts and improvements, whilst at the same time, it conspires, with higher means and influences, in ministering to the vigour and growth of the soul. Let us not fight against it. We need this admonition, because at the present moment there is a general disposition to shun labour; and this ought to be regarded as a bad sign of our times. The city is thronged with adventurers from the country, and the liberal professions are overstocked, in the hope of escaping the primeval sentence of living by the sweat of the brow; and to this crowding of men into trade we owe not only the neglect of agriculture, but, what is far worse, the demoralization of the community. It generates excessive competition, which of necessity generates fraud. Trade is turned to gambling; and a spirit of mad speculation exposes public and private interests to a disastrous instability. It is, then, no part of the

philanthropy which would elevate the labouring body, to exempt them from manual toil. In truth, a wise philanthropy would, if possible, persuade all men of all conditions to mix up a measure of this toil with their other pursuits. The body as well as the mind needs vigorous exertion, and even the studious would be happier were they trained to labour as well as thought. Let us learn to regard manual toil as the true discipline of a man. Not a few of the wisest, grandest spirits have toiled at the work-bench and the plough.

I have said that, by the elevation of the labouring mass, I do not mean that they are to be released from labour. I add, in the next place, that this elevation is not to be gained by efforts to force themselves into what are called the upper ranks of society. I wish them to rise, but I have no desire to transform them into gentlemen or ladies, according to the common acceptance of these terms. I desire for them not an outward and showy, but an inward and real change; not to give them new titles and an artificial rank, but substantial improvements and real claims to respect. I have no wish to dress them from a Parisian tailor's shop, or to teach them manners from a dancing school. I have no desire to see them, at the end of the day, doff their working dress, that they may play a part in richly attired circles. I have no desire that they should be admitted to luxurious feasts, or should get a taste for gorgeous upholstery. There is nothing cruel in the necessity which sentences the multitude of men to eat, dress, and lodge plainly and simply, especially where the sentence is executed so mildly as in this country. In this country, where the demand for labour is seldom interrupted, and the openings for enterprise are numerous beyond precedent, the labouring class, with few exceptions, may well be satisfied with their accommodations. Very many of them need nothing but a higher caste for beauty, order, and neatness, to give an

air of refinement and grace as well as comfort to their establishments. In this country, the mass of labourers have their share of outward good. Their food, abundant and healthful, seasoned with the appetite which labour gives, is, on the whole, sweeter as well as healthier than the elaborate luxuries of the prosperous; and their sleep is sounder and more refreshing than falls to the lot of the less employed. Were it a possible thing, I should be sorry to see them turned into men and women of fashion. Fashion is a poor vocation. Its creed, that idleness is a privilege, and work a disgrace, is among the deadliest errors. Without depth of thought, or earnestness of feeling, or strength of purpose, living an unreal life, sacrificing substance to show, substituting the factitious for the natural, mistaking a crowd for society, finding its chief pleasure in ridicule, and exhausting its ingenuity in expedients for killing time, fashion is among the last influences under which a human being who respects himself, or who comprehends the great end of life, would desire to be placed. I use strong language, because I would combat the disposition, too common in the labouring mass, to regard what is called the upper class with envy or admiration. This disposition manifests itself among them in various forms. Thus, when one of their number prospers, he is apt to forget his old acquaintance, and to work his way, if possible, into a more fashionable caste. As far, indeed, as he extends his acquaintance among the intelligent, refined, generous, and truly honourable, he makes a substantial improvement of his condition; but if, as is too often the case, he is admitted by way of favour into a circle which has few claims beyond those of greater luxuries and show, and which bestows on him a patronizing, condescending notice, in exchange for his old, honourable influence among his original associates, he does anything but rise. Such is not the elevation I desire for the labourer. I do not desire him

to struggle into another rank. Let him not be a servile copyist of other classes, but aim at something higher than has yet been realized in any body of men. Let him not associate the idea of Dignity or Honour with certain modes of living, or certain outward connections. I would have every man stand on his own ground, and take his place among men according to personal endowments and worth, and not according to outward appendages; and I would have every member of the community furnished with such means of improvement, that, if faithful to himself, he may need no outward appendage to attract the respect of all around him.

I have now said what I do not mean by the elevation of the labouring classes. It is not an outward change of condition. It is not release from labour. It is not struggling for another rank. I understand something deeper. I know but one elevation of a human being, and that is Elevation of Soul. Without this, it matters nothing where a man stands or what he possesses; and with it, he towers, he is one of God's nobility, no matter what place he holds in the social scale. There is but one elevation for a labourer, and for all other men. There are not different kinds of dignity for different orders of men, but one and the same to all. The one elevation of a human being consists in the exercise, growth, energy of the higher principles and powers of his soul. A bird may be shot upward to the skies by a foreign force; but it rises, in the true sense of the word, only when it spreads its own wings and soars by its own living power. So a man may be thrust upward into a conspicuous place by outward accidents; but he rises only in so far as he exerts himself, and expands his best faculties, and ascends by a free effort to a nobler region of thought and action. Such is the elevation I desire for the labourer, and I desire no other. This elevation is indeed to be aided by an improvement of his outward condition, and in turn it greatly improves

his outward lot; and, thus connected, outward good is real and great; but, supposing it to exist in separation from inward growth and life, it would be nothing worth, nor would I raise a finger to promote it.

I know it will be said that such elevation as I have spoken of is not and cannot be within the reach of the labouring multitude, and of consequence they ought not to be tantalized with dreams of its attainment. It will be said that the principal part of men are plainly designed to work on matter for the acquisition of material and corporeal good, and that, in such, the spirit is of necessity too wedded to matter to rise above it. This objection will be considered by and by; but I would just observe, in passing, that the objector must have studied very carelessly the material world, if he suppose that it is meant to be the grave of the minds of most of those who occupy it. Matter was made for spirit, body for mind. The mind, the spirit, is the end of this living organization of flesh and bones, of nerves and muscles; and the end of this vast system of sea and land, and air and skies. This unbounded creation of sun, and moon, and stars, and clouds, and seasons was not ordained merely to feed and clothe the body, but first and supremely to awaken, nourish, and expand the soul, to be the school of the intellect, the nurse of thought and imagination, the field for the active powers, a revelation of the Creator, and a bond of social union. We were placed in the material creation, not to be its slaves, but to master it, and to make it a minister to our highest powers. It is interesting to observe how much the material world does for the mind. Most of the sciences, arts, professions, and occupations of life grow out of our connection with matter. The natural philosopher, the physician, the lawyer, the artist, and the legislator, find the objects or occasions of their researches in matter. The poet borrows his beautiful imagery from matter. The sculptor and painter express

their noble conceptions through matter. Material wants rouse the world to activity. The material organs of sense, especially the eye, wake up infinite thoughts in the mind. To maintain, then, that the mass of men are and must be so immersed in matter that their souls cannot rise, is to contradict the great end of their connection with matter. I maintain that the philosophy which does not see, in the laws and phenomena of outward nature, the means of awakening Mind, is lamentably short-sighted; and that a state of society which leaves the mass of men to be crushed and famished in soul by excessive toils on matter is at war with God's designs, and turns into means of bondage what was meant to free and expand the soul.

Elevation of soul, this is to be desired for the labourer as for every human being; and what does this mean? The phrase, I am aware, is vague, and often serves for mere declamation. Let me strive to convey some precise ideas of it; and in doing this, I can use no language which will save the hearer from the necessity of thought. The subject is a spiritual one. It carries us into the depths of our own nature, and I can say nothing about it worth saying, without tasking your powers of attention, without demanding some mental toil. I know that these lectures are meant for entertainment rather than mental labour; but as I have told you, I have great faith in labour, and I feel that I cannot be more useful than in exciting the hearer to some vigorous action of mind.

Elevation of soul, in what does this consist? Without aiming at philosophical exactness, I shall convey a sufficiently precise idea of it, by saying that it consists, first, in force of Thought exerted for the acquisition of Truth; secondly, in force of pure and generous Feeling; thirdly, in force of Moral Purpose. Each of these topics needs a lecture for its development. I must confine myself to the first; from which, however, you may learn in a measure my views of the other two.

. Before entering on this topic, let me offer one preliminary remark. To every man who would 'rise in dignity as a man, be he rich or poor, ignorant or instructed, there is one essential condition, one effort, one purpose, without which not a step can be taken. He must resolutely purpose and labour to free himself from whatever he knows to be wrong in his motives and life. He who habitually allows himself in any known crime or wrong-doing, effectually bars his progress towards a higher intellectual and moral life. On this point every man should deal honestly with himself. If he will not listen to his conscience, rebuking him for violations of plain duty, let him not dream of self-elevation. The foundation is wanting. He will build, if at all, in sand.

I have said that the elevation of a man is to be sought, or rather consists, first, in force of Thought exerted for the acquisition of truth; and to this I ask your serious attention. Thought is the fundamental distinction of mind, and the great work of life. All that a man does outwardly, is but the expression and completion of his inward thought. To work effectually, he must think clearly. To act nobly, he must think nobly. Intellectual force is a principal element of the soul's life, and should be proposed by every man as a principal end of his being. It is common to distinguish between the intellect and the conscience, between the power of thought and virtue, and to say that virtuous action is worth more than strong thinking. But we mutilate our nature by thus drawing lines between actions or energies of the soul, which are intimately, indissolubly bound together. The head and the heart are not more vitally connected than thought and virtue. Does not conscience include, as a part of itself, the noblest action of the intellect or reason? Do we not degrade it by making it a mere feeling? Is it not something more? Is it not a wise

discernment of the right, the holy, the good? Take away thought from virtue, and what remains worthy of a man? Is not high virtue more than blind instinct? Is it not founded on, and does it not include clear, bright perceptions of what is lovely and grand in character and action? Without power of thought, what we call conscientiousness, or a desire to do right, shoots out into illusion, exaggeration, pernicious excess. The most cruel deeds on earth have been perpetrated in the name of conscience. Men have hated and murdered one another from a sense of duty. The worst frauds have taken the name of pious. Thought, intelligence, is the dignity of a man, and no man is rising but in proportion as he is learning to think clearly and forcibly, or directing the energy of his mind to the acquisition of truth. Every man, in whatsoever condition, is to be a student. No matter what other vocation he may have, his chief vocation is to Think.

I say every man is to be a student, a thinker. This does not mean that he is to shut himself within four walls, and bend body and mind over books. Men thought before books were written, and some of the greatest thinkers never entered what we call a study. Nature, Scripture, society, and life, present perpetual subjects for thought; and the man who collects, concentrates, employs his faculties on any of these subjects for the purpose of getting the truth, is so far a student, a thinker, a philosopher, and is rising to the dignity of a man. It is time that we should cease to limit to professed scholars the titles of thinkers, philosophers. Whoever seeks truth with an earnest mind, no matter when or how, belongs to the school of intellectual men.

In a loose sense of the word, all men may be said to think; that is, a succession of ideas, notions passes through their minds from morning to night; but in as far as this succession is passive, undirected, or governed

only by accident and outward impulse, it has little more claim to dignity than the experience of the brute, who receives, with like passiveness, sensations from abroad through his waking hours. Such thought, if thought it may be called, having no aim, is as useless as the vision of an eye which rests on nothing, which flies without pause over earth and sky, and of consequence receives no distinct image. Thought, in its true sense, is an energy of intellect. In thought, the mind not only receives impressions or suggestions from without or within, but reacts upon them, collects its attention, concentrates its forces upon them, breaks them up and analyzes them like a living laboratory, and then combines them anew, traces their connections, and thus impresses itself on all the objects which engage it.

The universe in which we live was plainly meant by God to stir up such thought as has now been described. It is full of difficulty and mystery, and can only be penetrated and unravelled by the concentration of the intellect. Every object, even the simplest in nature and society, every event of life, is made up of various elements subtly bound together; so that, to understand anything, we must reduce it from its complexity to its parts and principles, and examine their relations to one another. Nor is this all. Everything which enters the mind, not only contains a depth of mystery in itself, but is connected by a thousand ties with all other things. The universe is not a disorderly, disconnected heap, but a beautiful whole, stamped throughout with unity, so as to be an image of the One Infinite Spirit. Nothing stands alone. All things are knit together, each existing for all and all for each. The humblest object has infinite connections. The vegetable, which you saw on your table to-day, came to you from the first plant which God made to grow on the earth, and was the product of the rains and sunshine of six thousand years. Such a universe demands thought to

be understood; and we are placed in it to think, to put forth the power within, to look beneath the surface of things, to look beyond particular facts and events to their causes and effects, to their reasons and ends, their mutual influences, their diversities and resemblances, their proportions and harmonies, and the general laws which bind them together. This is what I mean by thinking; and by such thought the mind rises to a dignity which humbly represents the greatness of the Divine intellect; that is, it rises more and more to consistency of views, to broad, general principles, to universal truths, to glimpses of the order and harmony and infinity of the Divine system, and thus to a deep, enlightened veneration of the Infinite Father. Do not be startled, as if I were holding out an elevation of mind utterly to be despaired of; for all thinking, which aims honestly and earnestly to see things as they are, to see them in their connections, and to bring the loose, conflicting ideas of the mind into consistency and harmony, all such thinking, no matter in what sphere, is an approach to the dignity of which I speak. You are all capable of the thinking which I recommend. You have all practised it in a degree. The child, who casts an inquiring eye on a new toy, and breaks it to pieces that he may discover the mysterious cause of its movements, has begun the work of which I speak, has begun to be a philosopher, has begun to penetrate the unknown, to seek consistency and harmony of thought; and let him go on as he has begun, and make it one great business of life to inquire into the elements, connections, and reasons of whatever he witnesses in his own breast, or in society, or in outward nature, and be his condition what it may, he will rise by degrees to a freedom and force of thought, to a breadth and unity of views, which will be to him an inward revelation and promise of the intellectual greatness for which he was created.

You will observe, that in speaking of force of thought as the elevation of the labourer and of every human being, I have continually supposed this force to be exerted for the purpose of acquiring Truth. I beg you never to lose sight of this motive, for it is essential to intellectual dignity. Force of thought may be put forth for other purposes—to amass wealth for selfish gratification, to give the individual power over others, to blind others, to weave a web of sophistry, to cast a deceitful lustre on vice, to make the worse appear the better cause. But energy of thought, so employed, is suicidal. The intellect, in becoming a pander to vice, a tool of the passions, an advocate of lies, becomes not only degraded, but diseased. It loses the capacity of distinguishing truth from falsehood, good from evil, right from wrong; it becomes as worthless as an eye which cannot distinguish between colours or forms. Woe to that mind which wants the love of truth! For want of this, genius has become a scourge to the world, its breath a poisonous exhalation, its brightness a seducer into paths of pestilence and death. Truth is the light of the Infinite Mind, and the image of God in his creatures. Nothing endures but truth. The dreams, fictions, theories, which men would substitute for it, soon die. Without its guidance effort is vain, and hope baseless. Accordingly, the love of truth, a deep thirst for it, a deliberate purpose to seek it and hold it fast, may be considered as the very foundation of human culture and dignity. Precious as thought is, the love of truth is still more precious; for without it, thought—thought wanders and wastes itself, and precipitates men into guilt and misery. There is no greater defect in education and the pulpit than that they inculcate so little an impartial, earnest, reverential love of truth, a readiness to toil, to live and die for it. Let the labouring man be imbued in a measure with this spirit; let him learn to regard himself as endowed

with the power of thought, for the very end of acquiring truth; let him learn to regard truth as more precious than his daily bread; and the spring of true and perpetual elevation is touched within him. He has begun to be a man; he becomes one of the elect of his race. Nor do I despair of this elevation of the labourer. Unhappily, little, almost nothing has been done, as yet, to inspire either rich or poor with the love of truth for its own sake, or for the life and inspiration and dignity it gives to the soul. The prosperous have as little of this principle as the labouring mass. I think, indeed, that the spirit of luxurious, fashionable life is more hostile to it than the hardships of the poor. Under a wise culture, this principle may be awakened in all classes, and wherever awakened it will form philosophers, successful and noble thinkers. These remarks seem to me particularly important, as showing how intimate a union subsists between the moral and intellectual nature, and how both must work together from the beginning. All human culture rests on a moral foundation, on an impartial, disinterested spirit, on a willingness to make sacrifices to the truth. Without this moral power, mere force of thought avails nothing towards our elevation.

I am aware that I shall be told that the work of thought which I have insisted on is difficult, that, to collect and concentrate the mind for the truth is harder than to toil with the hands. Be it so. But are we weak enough to hope to rise without toil? Does any man, labourer or not, expect to invigorate body or mind without strenuous effort? Does not the child grow and get strength by throwing a degree of hardship and vehemence and conflict into his very sports? Does not life without difficulty become insipid and joyless? Can not a strong interest turn difficulty into pleasure? Let the love of truth, of which I have spoken, be awakened, and obstacles in the way to it will whet,

not discourage, the mind, and inspire a new delight into its acquisition.

I have hitherto spoken of force of Thought in general. My views will be given more completely and distinctly by considering next the objects on which this force is to be exerted. These may be reduced to two classes, Matter and Mind; the physical world which falls under our eyes, and the spiritual world. The working man is particularly called to make matter his study, because his business is to work on it, and he works more wisely, effectually, cheerfully, and honourably, in proportion as he knows what he acts upon, knows the laws and forces of which he avails himself, understands the reason of what he does, and can explain the changes which fall under his eye. Labour becomes a new thing when thought is thrown into it, when the mind keeps pace with the hands. Every farmer should study chemistry, so as to understand the elements or ingredients which enter into soils, vegetation, and manures, and the laws according to which they combine with and are loosened from one another. So, the mechanic should understand the mechanic powers, the laws of motion, and the history and composition of the various substances which he works on. Let me add that the farmer and the mechanic should cultivate the perception of beauty. What a charm and new value might the farmer add to his grounds and cottage, were he a man of taste! The product of the mechanic, be it great or small, a house or a shoe, is worth more, sometimes much more, if he can succeed in giving it the grace of proportion. In France, it is not uncommon to teach drawing to mechanics, that they may get a quick eye and a sure hand, and may communicate to their works the attraction of beauty. Every man should aim to impart this perfection to his labours. The more of mind we carry into toil the better. Without a habit of thought, a man works more like a brute or machine.

than like a man. With it, his soul is kept alive amidst his toils. He learns to fix an observing eye on the processes of his trade, catches hints which abridge labour, gets glimpses of important discoveries, and is sometimes able to perfect his art. Even now, after all the miracles of invention which honour our age, we little suspect what improvements of machinery are to spring from spreading intelligence and natural science among workmen.

But I do not stop here. Nature is to engage our force of thought, not simply for the aid which the knowledge of it gives in working, but for a higher end. Nature should be studied for its own sake, because so wonderful a work of God, because impressed with his perfection, because radiant with beauty, and grandeur, and wisdom, and beneficence. A labourer, like every other man, is to be liberally educated, that is, he is to get knowledge, not only for his bodily subsistence, but for the life, and growth, and elevation of his mind. Am I asked whether I expect the labourer to traverse the whole circle of the physical sciences? Certainly not; nor do I expect the merchant, or the lawyer, or the preacher to do it. Nor is this at all necessary to elevation of soul. The truths of physical science, which give greatest dignity to the mind, are those general laws of the creation which it has required ages to unfold, but which an active mind, bent on self-enlargement, may so far study and comprehend as to interpret the changes of nature perpetually taking place around us, as to see in all the forces of the universe the workings of one Infinite Power, and in all its arrangements the manifestation of one unsearchable wisdom.

And this leads me to observe the second great object on which force of thought is to be exerted, and that is Mind, Spirit, comprehending under this word God and all his intelligent offspring. This is the subject of what are called the metaphysical and moral sciences. This is the grand field for thought; for the outward, material

world is the shadow of the spiritual, and made to minister to it. This study is of vast extent. It comprehends theology, metaphysics, moral philosophy, political science, history, literature. This is a formidable list, and it may seem to include a vast amount of knowledge which is necessarily placed beyond the reach of the labourer. But it is an interesting thought, that the key to these various sciences is given to every human being in his own nature, so that they are peculiarly accessible to him. How is it that I get my ideas of God, of my fellow-creatures, of the deeds, suffering, motives which make up universal history? I comprehend all these from the consciousness of what passes in my own soul. The mind within me is a type representative of all others, and therefore I can understand all. Whence come my conceptions of the intelligence, and justice, and goodness, and power of God? It is because my own spirit contains the germs of these attributes. The ideas of them are first derived from my own nature, and therefore I comprehend them in other beings. Thus the foundation of all the sciences which treat of mind is laid in every man's breast. The good man is exercising in his business and family faculties and affections which bear a likeness to the attributes of the Divinity, and to the energies which have made the greatest men illustrious; so that, in studying himself, in learning the highest principles and laws of his own soul, he is in truth studying God, studying all human history, studying the philosophy which has immortalized the sages of ancient and modern times. In every man's mind and life all other minds and lives are more or less represented and wrapped up. To study other things, I must go into the outward world, and perhaps go far. To study the science of spirit, I must come home and enter my own soul. The profoundest books that have ever been written do nothing more than bring out, place in clear light, what is passing.

in each of your minds. So near you, so within you, is the grandest truth.

I have, indeed, no expectation that the labourer is to understand in detail the various sciences which relate to Mind. Few men in any vocation do so understand them. Nor is it necessary; though, where time can be commanded, the 'thorough study of some particular branch, in which the individual has a special interest, will be found of great utility. What is needed to elevate the soul is, not that a man should know all that has been thought and written in regard to the spiritual nature, not that a man should become an Encyclopædia, but that the great ideas, in which all discoveries terminate, which sum up all sciences, which the philosopher extracts from infinite details, may be comprehended and felt. It is not the quantity, but the quality of knowledge, which determines the mind's dignity. A man of immense information, may through the want of large and comprehensive ideas, be far inferior in intellect to a labourer, who, with little knowledge, has yet seized on great truths. For example, I do not expect the labourer to study theology in the ancient languages, in the writings of the Fathers, in the history of sects; nor is this needful. All theology, scattered as it is through countless volumes, is summed up in the idea of God; and let this idea shine bright and clear in the labourer's soul, and he has the essence of theological libraries, and a far higher light than has visited thousands of renowned divines. A great mind is formed by a few great ideas, not by an infinity of loose details. I have known very learned men, who seemed to me very poor in intellect, because they had no grand thoughts. What avails it, that a man has studied ever so minutely the histories of Greece and Rome, if the great ideas of freedom, and beauty, and valour, and spiritual energy, have not been kindled by these records into living fires in his

soul. The illumination of an age does not consist in the amount of its knowledge, but in the broad and noble principles, of which that knowledge is the foundation and inspirer. The truth is, that the most laborious and successful student is confined in his researches to a very few of God's works; but this limited knowledge of things may still suggest universal laws, broad principles, grand ideas, and these elevate the mind. There are certain thoughts, principles, ideas, which by their nature rule over all knowledge, which are intrinsically glorious, quickening, all-comprehending, eternal; and with these I desire to enrich the mind of the labourer and of every human being.

To illustrate my meaning, let me give a few examples of the great ideas which belong to the study or science of mind. Of course, the first of these, the grandest, the most comprehensive, is the idea of God, the parent Mind, the primitive and infinite Intelligence. Every man's elevation is to be measured first and chiefly by his conception of this great Being; and to attain a just and bright and quickening knowledge of Him, is the highest aim of thought. In truth, the great end of the universe, of revelation, of life, is to develop in us the idea of God. Much earnest, patient, laborious thought is required to see this Infinite Being as He is, to rise above the low, gross notions of the Divinity, which rush in upon us from our passions, from our selfish partialities, and from the low-minded world around us. There is one view of God particularly suited to elevate us. I mean the view of Him as the 'Father of our spirits'; as having created us with great powers to grow up to perfection; as having ordained all outward things to minister to the progress of the soul; as always present to inspire and strengthen us, to wake us up to inward life, and to judge and rebuke our wrong-doing; as looking with parental joy on our resistance of evil; as desiring to communicate Himself to our minds for,

ever. This one idea, expanded in the breast of the labourer, is a germ of elevation more fruitful than all science, no matter how extensive or profound, which treats only of outward finite things. It places him in the first rank of human beings. You hear of great theologians. He only deserves the name, be his condition what it may, who has, by thought and obedience, purified and enlarged his conception of God.

From the idea of God I proceed to another grand one, that of Man, of human nature; and this should be the object of serious, intense thought. Few men know, as yet, what a man is. They know his clothes, his complexion, his property, his rank, his follies, and his outward life. But the thought of his inward being, his proper humanity, has hardly dawned on multitudes; and yet, who can live a man's life that does not know what is the distinctive worth of a human being? It is interesting to observe how faithful men generally are to their idea of a man; how they act up to it. Spread the notion that courage is true manhood, and how many will die rather than fall short of that standard; and hence the true idea of a man, brought out in the labourer's mind, elevates him above every other class who may want it. Am I asked for my conception of the dignity of a human being? I should say, that it consists, first, in that spiritual principle, called sometimes the Reason, sometimes the Conscience, which, rising above what is local and temporary, discerns immutable truth and everlasting right; which, in the midst of imperfect things, conceives of Perfection; which is universal and impartial, standing in direct opposition to the partial, selfish principles of human nature; which says to me with authority, that my neighbour is as precious as myself, and his rights as sacred as my own; which commands me to receive all truth, however it may war with my pride, and to do all justice, however it may conflict with my interest: and

which calls me to rejoice with love in all that is beautiful, good, holy, happy, in whatever being these attributes may be found. This principle is a rare Divinity in man. We do not know what man is, still something of the celestial grandeur of this principle in the soul may be discerned. There is another grand view of man, included indeed in the former, yet deserving distinct notice. He is a Free being; created to act from a spring in his own breast, to form himself and to decide his own destiny; connected intimately with nature, but not enslaved to it; connected still more strongly with God, yet not enslaved even to the Divinity, but having power to render or withhold the service due to his Creator; encompassed by a thousand warring forces, by physical elements which inflict pleasure and pain, by dangers seen and unseen, by the influences of a tempting, sinful world, yet endued by God with power to contend with all, to perfect himself by conflict with the very forces which threaten to overwhelm him. Such is the idea of a man. Happy he in whom it is unfolded by earnest thought.

Had I time, I should be glad to speak of other great ideas belonging to the science of mind, and which sum up and give us, in one bright expression, the speculations of ages. The idea of Human Life, of its true end and greatness; the idea of Virtue, as the absolute and ultimate good; the idea of Liberty, which is the highest thought of political science, and which, by its intimate presence to the minds of the people, is the chief spring of our country's life and greatness,—all these might be enlarged on; and I might show how these may be awakened in the labourer, and may give him an elevation which many who are above labour want. But, leaving all these, I will only refer to another, one of the most important results of the science of mind, and which the labourer, in common with every man, may and should receive, and should strengthen by patient

thought. It is the idea of his importance as an individual.' He is to understand that he has a value, not as belonging to a community, and contributing to a general good which is distinct from himself, but on his own account. He is not a mere part of a machine. In a machine the parts are useless, but as conducing to the end of the whole, for which alone they subsist. Not so a man. He is not simply a means, but an end, and exists for his own sake, for the unfolding of his nature, for his own virtue and happiness. True, he is to work for others, but not servilely, not with a broken spirit, not so as to degrade himself; he is to work for others from a wise self-regard, from principles of justice and benevolence, and in the exercise of a free will and intelligence, by which his own character is perfected. His individual dignity, not derived from birth, from success, from wealth, from outward show, but consisting in the indestructible principles of his soul—this ought to enter into his habitual consciousness. I do not speak rhetorically or use the cant of rhapsodists, but I utter my calm, deliberate conviction, when I say that the labourer ought to regard himself with a self-respect unknown to the proudest monarch who rests on outward rank.

I have now illustrated what I mean by the great ideas which exalt the mind. Their worth and power cannot be exaggerated. They are the mightiest influences on earth. One great thought breathed into a man may regenerate him. The idea of Freedom in ancient and modern republics, the idea of Inspiration in various religious sects, the idea of Immortality, how have these triumphed over worldly interests! How many heroes and martyrs have they formed! Great ideas are mightier than the passions. To awaken them is the highest office of education. As yet it has been little thought of. The education of the mass of the people has consisted in giving them mechanical habits,

in breaking them to current usages and modes of thinking, in teaching religion and morality as traditions. It is time that a rational culture should take place of the mechanical; that men should learn to act more from ideas and principles, and less from blind impulse and undiscerning imitation.

Am I met here by the constantly recurring objection, that such great thoughts as have now been treated of are not to be expected in the multitude of men, whose means of culture are so confined? To this difficulty I shall reply in the next lecture; but I wish to state a fact, or law of our nature, very cheering to those who, with few means, still pant for generous improvement. It is this, that great ideas come to us less from outward, direct, laborious teaching, than from indirect influences, and from the native working of our own minds; so that those who want the outward apparatus for extensive learning are not cut off from them. Thus, laborious teachers may instruct us for years in God, and virtue, and the soul, and we may remain nearly as ignorant of them as at the beginning; whilst a look, a tone, an act of a fellow-creature, who is kindled by a grand thought, and who is thrown in our path at some susceptible season of life, will do much to awaken and expand this thought within us. It is a matter of experience that the greatest ideas often come to us, when right-minded, we know not how. They flash on us as lights from heaven. A man seriously given to the culture of his mind in virtue and truth, finds himself under better teaching than that of man. Revelations of his own soul, of God's intimate presence, of the grandeur of the creation, of the glory of disinterestedness, of the deformity of wrong-doing, of the dignity of universal justice, of the might of moral principle, of the immutableness of truth, of immortality, and of the inward sources of happiness; these revelations, awakening a thirst for something higher than he is or has,

come of themselves to an humble, self-improving man. Sometimes a common scene in nature, one of the common relations of life, will open itself to us with a brightness and pregnancy of meaning unknown before. Sometimes a thought of this kind forms an era in life. It changes the whole future course. It is a new creation. And these great ideas are not confined to men of any class. They are communications of the Infinite Mind to all minds which are open to their reception; and labour is a far better condition for their reception than luxurious or fashionable life. It is even better than a studious life, when this fosters vanity, pride, and the spirit of jealous competition. A child-like simplicity attracts these revelations more than a selfish culture of intellect, however far extended.

Perhaps a caution should be added to these suggestions. In speaking of great ideas, as sometimes springing up of themselves, as sudden illuminations, I have no thought of teaching that we are to wait for them passively, or to give up our minds unthinkingly to their control. We must prepare ourselves for them by faithfulness to our own powers, by availing ourselves of all means of culture within our reach; and, what is more, these illuminations, if they come, are not distant, complete, perfect views, but glimpses, suggestions, flashes, given us, like all notices and impressions from the outward world, to be thought upon, to be made subjects of patient reflection, to be brought by our own intellect and activity into their true connection with all our other thoughts. A great idea, without reflection, may dazzle and bewilder, may destroy the balance and proportion of the mind, and impel to dangerous excess. It is to awaken the free, earnest exertion of our powers, to rouse us from passiveness to activity and life, that inward aspirations, and the teachings of outward nature, are accorded to the mind.

II.

I NOW come to consider the objections which spring up in many minds, when such views of the labourer's destiny are given.

First, it will be objected, that the labouring multitude cannot command a variety of books, or spend much time in reading; and how, then, can they gain the force of thought, and the great ideas, which were treated of in the former lecture? This objection grows out of the prevalent disposition to confound intellectual improvement with book-learning. Some seem to think that there is a kind of magic in a printed page, that types give a higher knowledge than can be gained from other sources. Reading is considered as the royal road to intellectual eminence. This prejudice I have virtually set aside in my previous remarks; but it has taken so strong a hold of many as to need some consideration. I shall not attempt to repel the objection by decrying books. Truly good books are more than mines to those who can understand them. They are the breathings of the great souls of past times. Genius is not embalmed in them, as is sometimes said, but *lives* in them perpetually. But we need not many books to answer the great ends of reading. A few are better than many, and a little time given to a faithful study of the few will be enough to quicken thought and enrich the mind. The greatest men have not been book-men. Washington, it has often been said, was no great reader. The learning commonly gathered from books is of less worth than the truths we gain from experience and reflection. Indeed, most of the knowledge from reading, in these days, being acquired with little mental action, and seldom or never reflected on and turned to use, is very much a vain show. Events stirring the mind to earnest thought and vigorous application of its resources, do vastly more to elevate the mind, than

most of our studies at the present time. Few of the books read among us deserve to be read. Most of them have no principle of life, as is proved by the fact that they die the year of their birth. They do not come from thinkers, and how can they awaken thought? A great proportion of the reading of this city is useless, I had almost said pernicious. I should be sorry to see our labourers exchanging their toils for the reading of many of our young ladies and young gentlemen, who look on the intellect as given them for amusement; who read, as they visit, for amusement; who discuss no great truths and put forth no energy of thought on the topics which fly through their minds. With this insensibility to the dignity of the intellect, and this frittering away of the mind on superficial reading, I see not with what face they can claim superiority to the labouring mass, who certainly understand one thing thoroughly, that is, their own business, and who are doing something useful for themselves, and their fellow-creatures. The great use of books is, to rouse us to thought; to turn us to questions which great men have been working on for ages; to furnish us with materials for the exercise of judgment, imagination, and moral feeling; to breathe into us a moral life from higher spirits than our own; and this benefit of books may be enjoyed by those who have not much time for retired study.

It must not be forgotten, by those who despair of the labouring classes because they cannot live in libraries, that the highest sources of truth, light, and elevation of mind, are not libraries, but our inward and outward experience. Human life, with its joys and sorrows, its burdens and alleviations, its crimes and virtues, its deep wants, its solemn changes, and its retributions, always pressing on us; what a library is this, and who may not study it! Every human being is a volume worthy to be studied. The books which

circulate most freely through the community are those which give us pictures of human life. How much more improving is the original, did we know how to read it? The labourer has this page always open before him; and, still more, the labourer is every day writing a volume more full of instruction than all human productions—I mean, his own life. No work of the most exalted genius can teach us so much as the revelation of human nature in the secrets of our own souls, in the workings of our own passions, in the operations of our own intelligence, in the retributions which follow our own good and evil deeds, in the dissatisfaction with the present, in the spontaneous thoughts and aspirations which form part of every man's biography. The study of our own history from childhood, of all the stages of our development, of the good and bad influences which have beset us, of our mutations of feeling and purpose, and of the great current which is setting us towards future happiness or woe; this is a study to make us nobly wise; and who of us has not access to this fountain of eternal truth? May not the labourer study and understand the pages which he is writing in his own breast?

In these remarks, I have aimed to remove the false notion into which labourers themselves fall, that they can do little towards acquiring force and fulness of thought because in want of books. I shall next turn to prejudices more confined to other classes. A very common one is, that the Many are not to be called to think, study, improve their minds, because a privileged few are intended by God to do their thinking for them. 'Providence,' it is said, 'raises up superior minds, whose office it is to discover truth for the rest of the race. Thinking and manual toil are not meant to go together. The division of labour is a great law of nature. One man is to serve society by his head, another, by his hands. Let each class keep to its proper work.' These

doctrines I protest against. I deny to any individual or class this monopoly of thought. Who among men can show God's commission to think for his brethren, to shape passively the intellect of the mass, to stamp his own image on them as if they were wax? As well might a few claim a monopoly of light and air, of seeing and breathing, as of thought. Is not the intellect as universal a gift as the organs of sight and respiration? Is not truth as freely spread abroad as the atmosphere or the sun's rays? Can we imagine that God's highest gifts of intelligence, imagination, and moral power, were bestowed to provide only for animal wants, to be denied the natural means of growth, which is action, to be starved by drudgery? Were the mass of men made to be monsters, to grow only in a few organs and faculties, and to pine away and shrivel in others; or were they made to put forth all the powers of men, especially the best and most distinguishing? No man, not the lowest, is all hands, all bones and muscles. The mind is more essential to human nature, and more enduring, than the limbs; and was this made to lie dead? Is not thought the right and duty of all? Is not truth alike precious to all? Is not truth the natural aliment of the mind, as plainly as the wholesome grain is of the body? Is not the mind adapted to thought, as plainly as the eye to light, the ear to sound? Who dares to withhold it from its natural action, its natural element and joy? Undoubtedly some men are more gifted than others, and are marked out for more studious lives. But the work of such men is not to do other's thinking for them, but to help them to think more vigorously and effectually. Great minds are to make others great. Their superiority is to be used, not to break the multitude to intellectual vassalage, not to establish over them a spiritual tyranny, but to rouse them from lethargy, and to aid them to judge for themselves. The light and life which spring up in one soul

are to be spread far and wide. Of all treasons against humanity, there is no one worse than his who employs great intellectual force to keep down the intellect of his less favoured brother.

It is sometimes urged by those who consider the multitude as not intended to think, that at best they can learn but little, and that this is likely to harm rather than to do them good. 'A little learning,' we are told, 'is a dangerous thing.' 'Shallow draughts' of knowledge are worse than ignorance. The mass of the people, it is said, can go to the bottom of nothing; and the result of stimulating them to thought will be the formation of a dangerous set of half-thinkers. To this argument I reply, first, that it has the inconvenience of proving too much; for, if valid, it shows that none of any class ought to think. For who, I would ask, can go to the bottom of anything? Whose 'learning' is not 'little'? Whose 'draughts' of knowledge are not 'shallow'? Who of us has fathomed the depths of a single product of nature or a single event in history? Who of us is not baffled by the mysteries in a grain of sand? How contracted the range of the widest intellect! But is our knowledge, because so little, of no worth? Are we to despise the lessons which are taught us in this nook of creation, in this narrow round of human experience, because an infinite universe stretches around us, which we have no means of exploring, and in which the earth, and sun and planets, dwindle to a point? We should remember that the known, however little it may be, is in harmony with the boundless unknown, and a step towards it. We should remember, too, that the gravest truths may be gathered from a very narrow compass of information. God is revealed in his smallest work, as truly as in his greatest. The principles of human nature may be studied better in a family than in the history of the world. The finite is a manifestation of the infinite. The great Ideas, of which

I have formerly spoken, are within the reach of every man who thirsts for truth, and seeks it with singleness of mind. I will only add, that the labouring class are not now condemned to draughts of knowledge so shallow as to merit scorn. Many of them know more of the outward world than all the philosophers of antiquity; and Christianity has opened to them mysteries of the spiritual world which kings and prophets were not privileged to understand. And are they, then, to be doomed to spiritual inaction, as incapable of useful thought?

It is sometimes said, that the multitude may think on the common business of life, but not on higher subjects, and especially on religion. This, it is said, must be received on authority; on this, men in general can form no judgment of their own. But this is the last subject on which the individual should be willing to surrender himself to other's dictation. In nothing has he so strong an interest. In nothing is it so important that his mind and heart should be alive and engaged. In nothing has he readier means of judging for himself. In nothing, as history shows, is he more likely to be led astray by such as assume the office of thinking for him. Religion is a subject open to all minds. Its great truths have their foundation in the soul itself, and their proofs surround us on all sides. God has not shut up the evidence of his being in a few books, written in a foreign language, and locked up in the libraries of colleges and philosophers; but has written his name on the heavens and on the earth, and even on the minutest animal and plant; and his word, taught by Jesus Christ, was not given to scribes and lawyers, but taught to the poor, to the mass of men, on mountains, in streets, and on the sea-shore. Let me not be told that the multitude do actually receive religion on authority, or on the word of others. I reply, that a faith so received seems to me of little worth. The precious, the living, the effectual

part of a poor man's faith, is that of which he sees the reasonableness and excellence; that which approves itself to his intelligence, his conscience, his heart; that which answers to deep wants in his own soul, and of which he has the witness in his own inward and outward experience. All other parts of his belief, those which he takes on blind trust, and in which he sees no marks of truth and divinity, do him little or no good. Too often they do him harm, by perplexing his simple reason, by substituting the fictions and artificial systems of theologians for the plain precepts of love, and justice, and humility, and filial trust in God. As long as it was supposed that religion is to benefit the world by laying restraints, awakening fears, and acting as a part of the system of police, so long it was natural to rely on authority and tradition as the means of its propagation; so long it was desirable to stifle thought and inquiry on the subject. But now that we have learned that the true office of religion is to awaken pure and lofty sentiments, and to unite man to God by rational homage and enlightened love, there is something monstrous in placing religion beyond the thought and the study of the mass of the human race.

I proceed to another prejudice. It is objected, that the distinction of Ranks is essential to social order, and that this will be swept away by calling forth energy of thought in all men. This objection, indeed, though exceedingly insisted on in Europe, has nearly died out here; but still enough of it lingers among us to deserve consideration. I reply, then, that it is a libel on social order, to suppose that it requires for its support the reduction of the multitude of human beings to ignorance and servility; and that it is a libel on the Creator, to suppose that he requires, as the foundation of communities, the systematic depression of the majority of his intelligent offspring. The supposition is too grossly unreasonable, too monstrous, to require laboured refuta-

tion. I see no need of ranks, either for social order or for any other purpose. A great variety of pursuits and conditions is indeed to be desired. Men ought to follow their genius, and to put forth their powers in every useful and lawful way. I do not ask for a monotonous world. We are far too monotonous now. The vassalage of fashion, which is a part of rank, prevents continually the free expansion of men's powers. Let us have the greatest diversity of occupations. But this does not imply that there is a need of splitting society into castes or ranks, or that a certain number should arrogate superiority, and stand apart from the rest of men as a separate race. Men may work in different departments of life, and yet recognise their brotherly relation, and honour one another, and hold friendly communion with one another. Undoubtedly, men will prefer, as friends and common associates, those with whom they sympathise most. But this is not to form a rank or caste. For example, the intelligent seek out the intelligent; the pious, those who reverence God. But suppose the intellectual and the religious to cut themselves off by some broad, visible distinction from the rest of society, to form a clan of their own, to refuse admission into their houses to people of inferior knowledge and virtue, and to diminish as far as possible the occasions of intercourse with them; would not society rise up, as one man, against this arrogant exclusiveness? And if intelligence and piety may not be the foundations of a caste, on what ground shall they who have no distinction but wealth, superior costume, richer equipages, finer houses, draw lines around themselves and constitute themselves a higher class? That some should be richer than others is natural, and is necessary, and could only be prevented by gross violations of right. Leave men to the free use of their powers, and some will accumulate more than their neighbours. But, to be prosperous is not to be superior, and should form no

barrier between men. Wealth ought not to secure to the prosperous the slightest consideration. The only distinctions which should be recognised are those of the soul, of strong principle, of incorruptible integrity, of usefulness, of cultivated intellect, of fidelity in seeking for truth. A man, in proportion as he has these claims, should be honoured and welcomed everywhere. I see not why such a man, however coarsely if neatly dressed, should not be a respected guest in the most splendid mansions, and at the most brilliant meetings. A man is worth infinitely more than the saloons, and the costumes, and the show of the universe. He was made to tread all these beneath his feet. What an insult to humanity is the present deference to dress and upholstery, as if silk-worms, and looms, and scissors, and needles, could produce something nobler than a man! Every good man should protest against a caste founded on outward prosperity, because it exalts the outward above the inward, the material above the spiritual; because it springs from and cherishes a contemptible pride in superficial and transitory distinctions; because it alienates man from his brother, breaks the tie of common humanity, and breeds jealousy, scorn, and mutual ill-will. Can this be needed to social order?

It is true that in countries where the mass of the people are ignorant and servile, the existence of a higher and worshipped rank tends to keep them from outrage. It infuses a sentiment of awe, which prevents more or less the need of force and punishment. But it is worthy of remark, that the means of keeping order in one state of society, may become the chief excitement of discontent and disorder in another, and this is peculiarly true of aristocracy or high rank. In rude ages, this keeps the people down; but when the people by degrees have risen to some consciousness of their rights and essential equality with the rest of the race, the awe of rank naturally subsides, and passes into suspicion,

jealousy, and sense of injury, and a disposition to resist. The very institution which once restrained, now provokes.' Through this process the old world is now passing. The strange illusion, that a man, because he wears a garter or ribbon, or was born to a title, belongs to another race, is fading away; and society must pass through a series of revolutions, silent or bloody, until a more natural order takes place of distinctions which grew originally out of force. Thus, aristocracy, instead of giving order to society, now convulses it. So impossible is it for arbitrary human ordinations permanently to degrade human nature, or subvert the principles of justice and freedom.

I am aware that it will be said, 'that the want of refinement of manners and taste in the lower classes will necessarily keep them an inferior caste, even though all political equalities be removed.' I acknowledge this defect of manners in the multitude, and grant that it is an obstacle to intercourse with the more improved, though often exaggerated. But this is a barrier which must and will yield to the means of culture spread through our community. The evil is not necessarily associated with any condition of human life. An intelligent traveller¹ tells us, that in Norway, a country wanting many of our advantages, good manners and politeness are spread through all conditions; and that the 'rough way of talking to and living with each other, characteristic of the lower classes of society in England, is not found there.' Not many centuries ago, the intercourse of the highest orders in Europe was sullied by indelicacy and fierceness; but time has worn out these stains, and the same cause is now removing what is repulsive among those who toil with their hands. 'I cannot believe that coarse manners, boisterous conversation, slovenly negligences, filthy customs, surliness, indecency, are to descend by necessity from generation

¹ See Laing's Travels in Norway.

to generation in any portion of the community. I do not see why neatness, courtesy, delicacy, ease, and deference to others' feelings, may not be made the habits of the labouring multitude. A change is certainly going on among them in respect to manners. Let us hope that it will be a change for the better; that they will not adopt false notions of refinement; that they will escape the servile imitation of what is hollow and insincere, and the substitution of outward shows for genuine natural courtesy. Unhappily, they have but imperfect models on which to form themselves. It is not one class alone which needs reform in manners. We all need a new social intercourse, which shall breathe genuine refinement; which shall unite the two great elements of politeness, self-respect, and a delicate regard to the rights and feelings of others; which shall be free without rudeness, and earnest without positiveness; which shall be grateful, yet warm-hearted; and in which communication shall be frank, unlaboured, overflowing, through the absence of all assumption and pretence, and through the consciousness of being safe from heartless ridicule. This grand reform, which I trust is to come, will bring with it a happiness little known in social life; and whence shall it come? The wise and disinterested of all conditions must contribute to it; and I see not why the labouring classes may not take part in the work. Indeed, when I consider the greater simplicity of their lives and their greater openness to the spirit of Christianity, I am not sure but that the 'golden age' of manners is to begin among those who are now despaired of for their want of refinement.

In these remarks, I have given the name of 'prejudices' to the old opinions respecting rank, and respecting the need of keeping the people from much thought. But allow these opinions to have a foundation in truth; suppose high fences of rank to be necessary to refinement of manners; suppose that the

happiest of all ages were the feudal, when aristocracy was in its flower and glory, when the noble, superior to the laws, committed more murders in one year, than the multitude in twenty. Suppose it best for the labourer to live and die in thoughtless ignorance. Allow all this, and that we have reason to look with envy on the past; one thing is plain; the past is gone, the feudal castle is dismantled, the distance between classes greatly reduced. Unfortunate as it may be, the people have begun to think, to ask reasons for what they do, and suffer, and believe, and to call the past to account. Old spells are broken, old reliances gone. Men can no longer be kept down by pageantry, state-robes, forms, and shows. Allowing it to be best, that society should rest on the depression of the multitude, the multitude will no longer be quiet when they are trodden under foot, but ask impatiently why they too may not have a share in social blessings. Such is the state of things, and we must make the best of what we cannot prevent. Right or wrong, the people will think; and is it not important that they should think justly? that they should be inspired with the love of truth, and instructed how to seek it? that they should be established by wise culture in the great principles on which society and religion rest, and be protected from scepticism and wild speculation by intercourse with enlightened and virtuous men? It is plain, that in the actual state of the world, nothing can avail us but a real improvement of the mass of the people. No stable foundation can be laid for us but in men's minds. Alarming as the truth is, it should be told, that outward institutions cannot now secure us. Mightier powers than institutions have come into play among us,—the judgment, the opinions, the feelings of the many; and all hopes of stability, which do not rest on the progress of the many, must perish.

But a more serious objection than any yet considered,

to the intellectual elevation of the labouring class, remains to be stated. It is said, 'that the labourer can gain subsistence for himself and his family only by a degree of labour which forbids the use of means of improvement.' His necessary toils leave no time or strength for thought. Political economy, by showing that population outstrips the means of improvement, passes an irrepealable sentence of ignorance and degradation on the labourer. He can live but for one end, which is to keep himself alive. He cannot give time and strength to intellectual, social, and moral culture, without starving his family and impoverishing the community. Nature has laid this heavy law on the mass of the people, and it is idle to set up our theories and dreams of improvement against nature.'

This objection applies with great force to Europe, and is not without weight here. But it does not discourage me. I reply, first, to this objection, that it generally comes from a suspicious source. It comes, generally, from men who abound, and are at ease; who think more of property than of any other human interest; who have little concern for the mass of their fellow-creatures; who are willing that others should bear all the burdens of life, and that any social order should continue which secures to themselves personal comfort or gratification. The selfish epicure and the thriving man of business easily discover a natural necessity for that state of things which accumulates on themselves all the blessings, and on their neighbour all the evils of life. But no man can judge what is good or necessary for the multitude but he who feels for them, and whose equity and benevolence are shocked by the thought that all advantages are to be monopolized by one set of men, and all disadvantages by another. I wait for the judgment of profound thinkers and earnest philanthropists on this point, a judgment formed after patient study of political economy, and

human nature and human history ; nor even on such authority shall I readily despair of the multitude of my race.

In the next place, the objection under consideration is very much a repetition of the old doctrine, that what has been must be; that the future is always to repeat the past, and society to tread for ever the beaten path. But can anything be plainer than that the present condition of the world is peculiar, unprecedented? that new powers and new principles are at work? that the application of science to art is accomplishing a stupendous revolution? that the condition of the labourer is in many places greatly improved, and his intellectual aids increased? that abuses, once thought essential to society, and which seemed entwined with all its fibres, have been removed? Do the mass of men stand where they did a few centuries ago? And do not new circumstances, if they make us fearful, at the same time keep us from despair? The future, be it what it may, will not resemble the past. The present has new elements, which must work out new weal or woe. We have no right, then, on the ground of the immutableness of human affairs, to quench, as far as we have power, the hope of social progress.

Another consideration, in reply to the objection that the necessary toils of life exclude improvement, may be drawn not only from general history, but from the experience of this country in particular. The working classes here have risen and are still rising intellectually, and yet there are no signs of starvation, nor are we becoming the poorest people on earth. By far the most interesting view of this country is the condition of the working multitude. Nothing among us deserves the attention of the traveller so much as the force of thought and character, and the self-respect awakened by our history and institutions in the mass of the people. Our prosperous classes are much like the same

classes abroad, though, as we hope, of purer morals; but the great working multitude leave far behind them the labourers of other countries. No man of observation and benevolence can converse with them without being struck and delighted with the signs they give of strong and sound intellect and manly principle. And who is authorized to set bounds to this progress? In improvement the first steps are the hardest. The difficulty is to wake up men's souls, not to continue their action. Every accession of light and strength is a help to new acquisitions.

Another consideration, in reply to the objection, is that, as yet, no community has seriously set itself to the work of improving all its members, so that what is possible remains to be ascertained. No experiment has been made to determine how far liberal provision can be made at once for the body and the mind of the labourer. The highest social art is yet in its infancy. Great minds have nowhere solemnly, earnestly undertaken to resolve the problem, how the multitude of men may be elevated. The trial is to come. Still more, the multitude have nowhere comprehended distinctly the true idea of Progress, and resolved deliberately and solemnly to reduce it to reality. This great thought, however, is gradually opening on them, and it is destined to work wonders. From themselves their salvation must chiefly come. Little can be done for them by others, till a spring is touched in their own breasts; and this being done, they cannot fail. The people, as history shows us, can accomplish miracles under the power of a great idea. How much have they often done and suffered in critical moments for country, for religion? The great idea of their own elevation is only beginning to unfold itself within them, and its energy is not to be foretold. A lofty conception of this kind, were it once distinctly seized, would be a new life breathed into them. Under this impulse they would

create time and strength for their high calling, and would not only regenerate themselves, but the community.

Again, I am not discouraged by the objection, that the labourer, if encouraged to give time and strength to the elevation of his mind, will starve himself and impoverish the country, when I consider the energy and efficiency of Mind. The highest force in the universe is Mind. This created the heavens and the earth. This has changed the wilderness into fruitfulness, and linked distant countries in a beneficent ministry to one another's wants. It is not to brute force, to physical strength, so much as to art, to skill, to intellectual and moral energy, that men owe their mastery over the world. It is mind which has conquered matter. To fear, then, that by calling forth a people's mind, we shall impoverish and starve them, is to be frightened at a shadow. I believe that with the growth of intellectual and moral power in the community, its productive power will increase, that industry will become more efficient, that a wiser economy will accumulate wealth, that unimagined resources of art and nature will be discovered. I believe that the means of living will grow easier, in proportion as a people shall become enlightened, self-respecting, resolute, and just. Bodily or material forces can be measured, but not the forces of the soul; nor can the results of increased mental energy be foretold. Such a community will tread down obstacles now deemed invincible, and turn them into helps. The Inward moulds the Outward. The power of a people lies in its mind; and this mind, if fortified and enlarged, will bring external things into harmony with itself. It will create a new world around it, corresponding to itself. If, however, I err in this belief; if, by securing time and means for improvement to the multitude, industry and capital should become less productive, I still say, Sacrifice the wealth, and not the

mind of a people. Nor do I believe that the physical good of a community would in this way be impaired. The diminution of a country's wealth, occasioned by general attention to intellectual and moral culture, would be followed by very different effects from those which would attend an equal diminution brought about by sloth, intemperance, and ignorance. There would, indeed, be less production in such a country, but the character and spirit of the people would effect a much more equal distribution of what would be produced; and the happiness of a community depends vastly more on the distribution than on the amount of its wealth. In thus speaking of the future, I do not claim any special prophetic gift. As a general rule, no man is able to foretell distinctly the ultimate, permanent results of any great social change. But as to the case before us, we ought not to doubt. It is a part of religion to believe that by nothing can a country so effectually gain happiness and lasting prosperity as by the elevation of all classes of its citizens. To question this seems an approach to crime.

‘ If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble.’

I am aware that, in reply to all that has been said in favour of the possibility of uniting self-improvement with labour, discouraging facts may be brought forward from our daily experience. It may be said, that in this country, under advantages unknown in other lands, there is a considerable number on whom the burden of toil presses very heavily, who can scarcely live with all their efforts, and who are cut off by their hard condition from the means of intellectual culture; and if this take place now, what are we to expect hereafter in a more crowded population? I acknowledge that we have a number of depressed labourers, whose state is exceedingly unpropitious to the education of the mind; but

this argument will lose much of its power when we inquire into the causes of this evil. We shall then see that it comes, not from outward necessity, not from the irresistible obstacles abroad, but chiefly from the fault or ignorance of the sufferers themselves; so that the elevation of the mind and character of the labourer tends directly to reduce, if not remove, the evil. Of consequence, this elevation finds support in what is urged against it. In confirmation of these views, allow me just to hint at the causes of that depression of many labourers which is said to show that labour and self-improvement cannot go on together.

First, how much of this depression is to be traced to Intemperance? What a great amount of time, and strength, and money, might multitudes gain for self-improvement by a strict sobriety! That cheap remedy, pure water, would cure the chief ills in very many families of the ignorant and poor. Were the sums which are still lavished on ardent spirits appropriated wisely to the elevation of the people, what a new world we should live in! Intemperance not only wastes the earnings, but the health and the minds of men. How many, were they to exchange what they call moderate drinking for water, would be surprised to learn that they had been living under a cloud, in half-stupefaction, and would become conscious of an intellectual energy of which they had not before dreamed? Their labours would exhaust them less; and less labour would be needed for their support; and thus their inability to cultivate their high nature would in a great measure be removed. The working class, above all men, have an interest in the cause of temperance, and they ought to look on the individual who lives by scattering the means and excitements of drunkenness, not only as the general enemy of his race, but as their own worst foe."

In the next place, how much of the depression of labourers may be traced to the want of a strict Economy?

The prosperity of this country has produced a wastefulness that has extended to the labouring multitude. A man, here, turns with scorn from fare that in many countries would be termed luxurious. It is, indeed, important that the standard of living in all classes should be high; that is, it should include the comforts of life, the means of neatness and order in our dwellings, and such supplies of our wants as are fitted to secure vigorous health. But how many waste their earnings on indulgences which may be spared, and thus have no resource for a dark day, and are always trembling on the brink of pauperism? Needless expenses keep many too poor for self-improvement. And here let me say that expensive habits among the more prosperous labourers often interfere with the mental culture of themselves and their families. How many among them sacrifice improvement to appetite! How many sacrifice it to the love of show, to the desire of outstripping others, and to habits of expense which grow out of this insatiable passion! In a country so thriving and luxurious as ours, the labourer is in danger of contracting artificial wants and diseased tastes; and to gratify these, he gives himself wholly to accumulation, and sells his mind for gain. Our unparalleled prosperity has not been an unmixed good. It has inflamed cupidity, has diseased the imagination with dreams of boundless success, and plunged a vast multitude into excessive toils, feverish competitions, and exhausting cares. A labourer, having secured a neat home and a wholesome table, should ask nothing more for the senses; but should consecrate his leisure, and what may be spared of his earnings, to the culture of himself and his family, to the best books, to the best teaching, to pleasant and profitable intercourse, to sympathy and the offices of humanity, and to the enjoyment of the beautiful in nature and art. Unhappily, the labourer, if prosperous, is anxious to ape the rich

man, instead of trying to rise above him, as he often may, by noble acquisitions. The young, in particular, the apprentice and the female domestic, catch a taste for fashion, and on this altar sacrifice too often their uprightness, and almost always the spirit of improvement, dooming themselves to ignorance, if not to vice, for a vain show. Is this evil without a remedy? Is human nature always to be sacrificed to outward decoration? Is the outward always to triumph over the inward man? Is nobleness of sentiment never to spring up among us? May not a reform in this particular begin in the labouring class, since it seems so desperate among the more prosperous? Cannot the labourer, whose condition calls him so loudly to simplicity of taste and habits, take his stand against that love of dress which dissipates and corrupts so many minds among the opulent? Cannot the labouring class refuse to measure men by outward success, and pour utter scorn on all pretensions founded on outward show or condition? Sure I am that, were they to study plainness of dress and simplicity of living, for the purpose of their own true elevation, they would surpass in intellect, in taste, in honourable qualities, and in present enjoyment, that great proportion of the prosperous who are softened into indulgence or enslaved to empty show. By such self-denial, how might the burden of labour be lightened, and time and strength redeemed for improvement!

Another cause of the depressed condition of not a few labourers, as I believe, is their ignorance on the subject of Health. Health is the working-man's fortune, and he ought to watch over it, more than the capitalist over his large investments. Health lightens the efforts of body and mind. It enables a man to crowd much work into a narrow compass. Without it little can be earned, and that little by slow, exhausting toil. For these reasons, I cannot but look on it as a

good omen that the press is circulating among us cheap works, in which much useful knowledge is given of the structure and functions and laws of the human body. It is in no small measure through our own imprudence that disease and debility are incurred, and one remedy is to be found in Knowledge. Once let the mass of the people be instructed in their own frames, let them understand clearly that disease is not an accident, but has fixed causes, many of which they can avert, and a great amount of suffering, want, and consequent intellectual depression will be removed.—I hope I shall not be thought to digress too far, when I add, that were the mass of the community more enlightened on these points, they would apply their knowledge, not only to their private habits, but to the government of the city, and would insist on municipal regulations favouring general health. This they owe to themselves. They ought to require a system of measures for effectually cleansing the city; for supplying it with pure water, either at public expense or by a private corporation; and for prohibiting the erection or the letting of such buildings as must generate disease. What a sad thought is it, that in this metropolis, the blessings which God pours forth profusely on bird and beast, the blessings of air, and light, and water, should in the case of many families be so stinted or so mixed with impurities as to injure instead of invigorating the frame. With what face can the great cities of Europe and America boast of their civilization, when within their limits, thousands and ten thousands perish for want of God's freest, most lavish gifts! Can we expect improvement among people who are cut off from nature's common bounties, and want those cheering influences of the elements which even savages enjoy? In this city, how much health, how many lives are sacrificed to the practice of letting cellars and rooms which cannot be ventilated, which want the benefits of light, free air,

and pure water, and the means of removing filth? We forbid by law the selling of putrid meat in the market. Why do we not forbid the renting of rooms, in which putrid, damp, and noisome vapours are working as sure destruction as the worst food? Did people understand, that they are as truly poisoned in such dens, as by tainted meat and decaying vegetables, would they not appoint commissioners for houses, as truly as commissioners for markets? Ought not the renting of untenable rooms, and the crowding of such numbers into a single room as must breed disease and may infect a neighbourhood, be as much forbidden as the importation of a pestilence? I have enlarged on this point, because I am persuaded that the morals, manners, decencies, self-respect, and intellectual improvement, as well as the health and physical comforts of a people, depend on no outward circumstances more than on the quality of the houses in which they live. The remedy of the grievance now stated, lies with the people themselves. The labouring people must require, that the health of the city shall be a leading object of the municipal administration, and in so doing they will protect at once the body and the mind.

III.

HAVING now treated of the elevation of the labourer, and examined the objections to it, I proceed, in the last place, to consider some of the circumstances of the times which encourage hopes of the progress of the mass of the people. My limits oblige me to confine myself to very few.—And, first, it is an encouraging circumstance, that the respect for labour is increasing, or rather that the old prejudices against manual toil, as degrading a man or putting him in a lower sphere, are wearing away; and the cause of this change is full of promise; for it is to be found in the progress of intelli-

gence, Christianity and freedom, all of which cry aloud against the old barriers created between the different classes, and challenge especial sympathy and regard for those who bear the heaviest burdens, and create most of the comforts of social life. The contempt of labour of which I have spoken is a relic of the old aristocratic prejudices which formerly proscribed trade as unworthy of a gentleman, and must die out with other prejudices of the same low origin. And the results must be happy. It is hard for a class of men to respect themselves who are denied respect by all around them. A vocation looked on as degrading will have a tendency to degrade those who follow it. Away, then, with the idea of something low in manual labour. There is something shocking to a religious man in the thought that the employment which God has ordained for the vast majority of the human race, should be unworthy of any man, even of the highest. If, indeed, there were an employment which could not be dispensed with, and which yet tended to degrade such as might be devoted to it, I should say that it ought to be shared by the whole race, and thus neutralized by extreme division, instead of being laid as the sole vocation on one man or a few. Let no human being be broken in spirit or trodden under foot for the outward prosperity of the State. So far is manual labour from meriting contempt or slight, that it will probably be found, when united with true means of spiritual culture, to foster a sounder judgment, a keener observation, a more creative imagination, and a purer taste, than any other vocation. Man thinks of the few, God of the many; and the many will be found at length to have within their reach the most effectual means of progress.

Another encouraging circumstance of the times is the creation of a popular literature, which puts within the reach of the labouring class the means of knowledge, in whatever branch they wish to cultivate. Amidst the

worthless volumes which are every day sent from the press for mere amusement, there are books of great value in all departments, published for the benefit of the mass of readers. Mines of inestimable truth are thus open to all who are resolved to think and learn. Literature is now adapting itself to all wants, and I have little doubt that a new form of it will soon appear for the special benefit of the labouring classes. This will have for its object to show the progress of the various useful arts, and to preserve the memory of their founders, and of men who have laid the world under obligation by great inventions. Every trade has distinguished names in its history. Some trades can number, among those who have followed them, philosophers, poets, men of true genius. I would suggest to the members of this Association whether a course of lectures, intended to illustrate the history of the more important trades, and of the great blessings they have conferred on society, and of the eminent individuals who have practised them, might not do much to instruct and, at the same time, to elevate them. Such a course would carry them far into the past, would open to them much interesting information, and at the same time introduce them to men whom they may well make their models. I would go farther. I should be pleased to see the members of an important trade setting apart an anniversary for the commemoration of those who have shed lustre on it by their virtues, their discoveries, their genius. It is time that honour should be awarded on higher principles than have governed the judgment of past ages. Surely the inventor of the press, the discoverer of the compass, the men who have applied the power of steam to machinery, have brought the human race more largely into their debt than the bloody race of conquerors, and even than many beneficent princes. : Antiquity exalted into Divinities the first cultivators of wheat and the useful plants, and the first forgers of metals ; and we, in these maturer

ages of the world, have still greater names to boast in the records of useful art. Let their memory be preserved to kindle a generous emulation in those who have entered into their labours.

Another circumstance, encouraging the hope of progress in the labouring class, is to be found in the juster views they are beginning to adopt in regard to the education of their children. On this foundation, indeed, our hope for all classes must chiefly rest. All are to rise chiefly by the care bestowed on the young. Not that I would say, as is sometimes rashly said, that none but the young can improve. I give up no age as desperate. Men who have lived thirty, or fifty years, are not to feel as if the door was shut upon them. Every man who thirsts to become something better has in that desire a pledge that his labour will not be in vain. None are too old to learn. The world, from our first to our last hour, is our school, and the whole of life has but one great purpose, education. Still, the child, uncorrupted, unhardened, is the most hopeful subject; and vastly more, I believe, is hereafter to be done for children, than ever before, by the gradual spread of a simple truth, almost too simple, one would think, to need exposition, yet up to this day wilfully neglected, namely, that education is a sham, a cheat, unless carried on, by able, accomplished teachers. The dignity of the vocation of a teacher is beginning to be understood, the idea is dawning on us that no office can compare in solemnity and importance with that of training the child; that skill to form the young to energy, truth, and virtue, is worth more than the knowledge of all other arts and sciences; and that, of consequence, the encouragement of excellent teachers is the first duty which a community owes to itself. I say, the truth is dawning, and it must make its way. The instruction of the children of all classes, especially of the labouring class, has as yet been too generally committed to

unprepared, unskilful hands, and of course the school is in general little more than a name. The whole worth of a school lies in the teacher. You may accumulate the most expensive apparatus for instruction; but without an intellectual, gifted teacher, it is little better than rubbish; and such a teacher, without apparatus, may effect the happiest results. Our university boasts, and with justice, of its library, cabinets, and philosophical instruments; but these are lifeless, profitless, except as made effectual by the men who use them. A few eminent men, skilled to understand, reach, and quicken the minds of the pupils, are worth all these helps. And I say this, because it is commonly thought that the children of the labouring class cannot be advanced, in consequence of the inability of parents to furnish a variety of books and other apparatus. But, in education, various books and implements are not the great requisites, but a high order of teachers. In truth, a few books do better than many. The object of education is not so much to give a certain amount of knowledge, as to awaken the faculties and give the pupil the use of his own mind; and one book, taught by a man who knows how to accomplish these ends, is worth more than libraries as usually read. It is not necessary that much should be taught in youth, but that a little should be taught philosophically, profoundly, livingly. For example, it is not necessary that the pupil be carried over the history of the world from the deluge to the present day. Let him be helped to read a single history wisely, to apply the principles of historical evidence to its statements, to trace the causes and effects of events, to penetrate into the motives of actions, to observe the workings of human nature in what is done and suffered, to judge impartially of action and character, to sympathize with what is noble, to detect the spirit of an age in different forms from our own, to seize the great truths which are wrapped up in details,

and to discern a moral Providence, a retribution, amidst all corruptions and changes; let him learn to read a single history thus, and he has learned to read all histories; he is prepared to study, as he may have time in future life, the whole course of human events; he is better educated by this one book than he would be by all the histories in all languages as commonly taught. The education of the labourer's children need never stop for want of books and apparatus. More of them would do good, but enough may be easily obtained. What we want is, a race of teachers acquainted with the philosophy of the mind, gifted men and women, who shall respect human nature in the child, and strive to touch and gently bring out his best powers and sympathies; and who shall devote themselves to this as the great end of life. This good I trust is to come, but it comes slowly. The establishment of normal schools shows that the want of it begins to be felt. This good requires that education shall be recognized by the community as its highest interest and duty. It requires that the instructors of youth shall take precedence of the money-getting classes, and that the woman of fashion shall fall behind the female teacher. It requires that parents shall sacrifice show and pleasure to the acquisition of the best possible helps and guides for their children. Not that a great pecuniary compensation is to create good teachers; these must be formed by individual impulse, by a genuine interest in education; but good impulse must be seconded by outward circumstances; and the means of education will always bear a proportion to the respect in which the office of teacher is held in the community.

Happily, in this country, the true idea of education, of its nature and supreme importance, is silently working and gains ground. Those of us who look back on half a century see a real, great improvement in schools and in the standard of instruction. What should en-

courage this movement in this country is that nothing is wanting here to the intellectual elevation of the labouring class, but that a spring should be given to the child, and that the art of thinking justly and strongly should be formed in early life; for, this preparation being made, the circumstances of future life will almost of themselves carry on the work of improvement. It is one of the inestimable benefits of free institutions that they are constant stimulants to the intellect; that they furnish, in rapid succession, quickening subjects of thought and discussion. A whole people at the same moment are moved to reflect, reason, judge, and act on matters of deep and universal concern; and where the capacity of thought has received wise culture, the intellect, unconsciously, by an almost irresistible sympathy, is kept perpetually alive. The mind, like the body, depends on the climate it lives in, on the air it breathes; and the air of freedom is bracing, exhilarating, expanding, to a degree not dreamed of under a despotism. This stimulus of liberty, however, avails little, except where the mind has learned to think for the acquisition of truth. The unthinking and passionate are hurried by it into ruinous excess.

The last ground of hope for the elevation of the labourer, and the chief and the most sustaining, is the clearer development of the principles of Christianity. The future influences of this religion are not to be judged from the past. Up to this time, it has been made a political engine, and in other ways perverted. But its true spirit, the spirit of brotherhood and freedom, is beginning to be understood, and this will undo the work which opposite principles have been carrying on for ages. Christianity is the only effectual remedy for the fearful evils of modern civilization—a system which teaches its members to grasp at everything, and to rise above everybody, as the great aims of life. Of such a civilization the natural fruits are, contempt of

others' rights, fraud, oppression, a gambling spirit in trade, reckless adventure, and commercial convulsions, all tending to impoverish the labourer and to render every condition insecure.' Relief is to come, and can only come, from the new application of Christian principles, of universal justice, and universal love, to social institutions, to commerce, to business, to active life. This application has begun, and the labourer, above all men, is to feel its happy and exalting influences.

In these lectures I have expressed a strong interest in the labouring portion of the community; but I have no partiality to them, considered merely as labourers. My mind is attracted to them because they constitute the majority of the human race. My great interest is in Human Nature, and in the working classes as its most numerous representatives. To those who look on this nature with contempt or utter distrust, such language may seem a mere form, or may be construed as a sign of the predominance of imagination and feeling over the judgment. No matter. The pity of these sceptics I can return. Their wonder at my credulity cannot surpass the sorrowful astonishment with which I look on their indifference to the fortunes of their race. In spite of all their doubts and scoffs, Human Nature is still most dear to me. When I behold it manifested in its perfect proportions in Jesus Christ, I cannot but revere it as the true Temple of the Divinity. When I see it as revealed in the great and good of all times, I bless God for those multiplied and growing proofs of its high destiny. When I see it bruised, beaten down, stifled by ignorance and vice, by oppression, injustice, and grinding toil, I weep for it, and feel that every man should be ready to suffer for its redemption. I do and I must hope for its progress. But, in saying this, I am not blind to its immediate dangers. I am not sure that dark clouds and desolating storms are not even now,

gathering over the world. When we look back on the mysterious history of the human race, we see that Providence has made use of fearful revolutions as the means of sweeping away the abuses of ages, and of bringing forward mankind to their present improvement. Whether such revolutions may not be in store for our own times, I know not. The present civilization of the Christian world presents much to awaken doubt and apprehension. It stands in direct hostility to the great ideas of Christianity. It is selfish, mercenary, sensual. Such a civilization cannot, must not endure for ever. How it is to be supplanted, I know not. I hope, however, that it is not doomed, like the old Roman civilization, to be quenched in blood. I trust that the works of ages are not to be laid low by violence, rapine, and the all-devouring sword. I trust that the existing social state contains in its bosom something better than it has yet unfolded. I trust that a brighter future is to come, not from the desolation, but from gradual, meliorating changes of the present. Among the changes to which I look for the salvation of the Modern world, one of the chief is the intellectual and moral elevation of the labouring class. The impulses which are to reform and quicken society are probably to come, not from its more conspicuous, but from its obscurer divisions; and, among these I see with joy new wants, principles, and aspirations beginning to unfold themselves. Let what is already won give us courage. Let faith in a parental Providence give us courage; and if we are to be disappointed in the present, let us never doubt that the great interests of human nature are still secure under the eye and care of an Almighty Friend.

III.
THE RELIGIOUS LIFE.

‘TURN the matter as we may, it will appear that the fullest, most unqualified admission of a moral and rational nature in man, whose decisions no external power can overrule, and which constitutes God’s ever open court for trying the claims of scripture and prophecy, no less than of philosophy, is the prime requisite of all devout faith ; without which, duty loses its sacredness, revelation its significance, and God himself his authority.’--JAMES MARTINEAU.

THE RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE IN HUMAN NATURE.¹

'The Lord our God is one Lord : and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength ; this is the first commandment.'—MARK xii. 29, 30.

THE command thus given to love God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, is in harmony with our whole nature. We are made for God ; all our affections, sensibilities, faculties, and energies are designed to be directed towards God ; the end of our existence is fellowship with God. He could not require us to devote our entire being to Himself, if He had not endowed it with powers which fit us for such devotion. Religion then has its germs in our Nature, and its development is entrusted to our own care. Such is the truth that I would now illustrate.

(1.) The Principle in Human Nature, from which religion springs, is the desire to *establish relations* with a Being more Perfect than itself. The fact is as remarkable as it is incontrovertible, that the human race, all but universally, has conceived of some Existence more exalted than man. If there is one principle, indeed, that may be declared to be essential in human nature,

¹ This discourse and the five which follow are taken from 'The Perfect Life,' a volume of twelve Sermons, chosen from Dr. Channing's MSS. by W. H. Channing, and published in 1873. The discourses are characterised, writes his nephew, by the 'purity, largeness, and loftiness of their religious life.'

it is this unwillingness to shut itself up within its own limits. this tendency to aspire after intercourse with some Divinity. It is true that men at various periods have formed most unworthy conceptions of their objects of worship. Still, by selecting the qualities which they esteemed most highly in themselves, and by enlarging and exalting them without bounds, they have showed, as plainly as have more enlightened ages, the spontaneous longing of the human spirit to rise above itself, and to ally its destiny with a Supreme Power.

This simple view is sufficient to prove the grandeur of the Religious Principle. Without doubt, it is the noblest working of Human Nature. In the most immature manifestation of this principle, we behold the budding of those spiritual powers, by which, in the progress of the race, men have attained to the conception of unbounded Goodness. We see this principle in the creations of genius, in forms of ideal beauty to which poetry and the arts give immortality, in fiction where characters are portrayed surpassing the attainments of real life. We see this principle in the admiration with which stupendous intellect and heroic virtue are hailed, and in the delight with which we follow in history the career of men who in energy and disinterestedness have outstripped their fellows. The desire for an excellence never actually reached by humanity, the aspiration towards that Ideal which we express by the word Perfection, this is the seminal principle of religion. And this is the root of all progress in the human race. Religion is not an exclusive impulse. It does not grow from an emotion that is centred wholly upon God and seeks no other object. It springs from the same desire for whatever is more Perfect than our own nature and our present life, which has impelled men towards all his great spiritual acquisitions and to all great improvements of society. This principle, as we have seen, prompts the mind to create imaginary beings, and to

attach itself with delight to human agents of surpassing power, and goodness. But in these objects it can find no rest. These are too frail a support for so sublime an emotion. This principle God implanted for Himself. Through this the human mind corresponds to the supreme Divinity. This principle being in its very essence insatiable partakes of the nature of infinity; and no Being but the Infinite One can supply its wants.

• This view conducts us to an important standard, by which to judge of the truth and purity of any form of religion. A religion is true, in proportion to the clearness with which it makes manifest the Perfection of God. The purity of a particular system is to be measured by the conception which it inspires of God. Does it raise our thoughts to a Perfect Being? Does it exalt us far above our own nature? Does it introduce us to a grand and glorious Intelligence? Does it expand our minds with venerable and generous conceptions of the Author of existence? I know no other test of a true and pure religion but this. Religion has no excellence, but as it lifts us up into communion with a Nature higher and holier than our own. It is the office of religion to offer the soul an Object for its noblest faculties and affections, a being through whom it may more surely and vigorously be carried forward to its own perfection. In proportion then as a religion casts clouds around the glory of God, or detracts from the loveliness and grandeur of His character, it is devoid of dignity, and tends to depress the mind.

All human systems are necessarily defective. They partake of the limits of the human mind. The purest religion which man ever has adopted or ever will adopt, must fall very far below the glory of its Object. Our best conceptions of God, are undoubtedly mixed with much error. We talk indeed of truth, as if we held it in its fulness; but in religion, as elsewhere, we make approaches only to the truth. We see God in the

mirror of our own minds; but these are narrow and in many ways darkened. We see Him in his works; but of these we comprehend a minute portion only. He speaks to us by his spirit in scripture and in the heart; but He speaks to us in human language, and adapts Himself to our weak capacities, so that we catch mere glimpses of his perfection. The Religious Principle itself, by which we perceive and love God, is as limited at birth as are our other faculties, and is gradually unfolded. It embraces error at first by necessity. The earliest idea of God in the child is as faint as are its conceptions of all other objects. Necessarily it invests the Creator with a human form, places Him in the heavens, and clothes Him with an undefined power superior only to that possessed by those around it. This idea, however, of some Being higher than man takes root; and from this religion grows up. As we advance, we throw off more and more our childish notions, purify our thought of God, divest Him of matter, conceive of Him as mind, refine away from Him our passions, and especially assign to Him the attributes which our growing consciences recognize as righteous and holy. Still we are making approaches only, and slow approaches, towards God. Much of earth, much of our own incompleteness, still clings to our conception of the Divinity whom we worship. And the wise man is distinguished by detecting continually whatever is low in his apprehension of God, and by casting it away for more exalted views.

(2.) I now proceed to show more directly that religion is natural to man and is his great end. And for this purpose I go to Human Nature. Time will permit but few illustrations of this great theme; for when we survey man's various faculties, affections, and powers, all concur in bearing testimony to the truth now advanced. All are so many elements of religion.

(i.) Look first at the Reason, that divine germ within. I ask you to consider what are the primitive, profoundest, and clearest ideas of Reason. They are the very ideas which lead to God. The earliest inquiry of Reason is into Causes. Even the child breaks his toys to discover the spring of their motion. Reason cannot satisfy itself with observing what exists, but seeks to explore its origin. It asks by instinct, whence comes the order of the universe, and cannot rest until it has ascended to a First Cause. The idea of God is thus involved in the primitive and most universal idea of Reason, and is one of its central principles.

Among other tendencies in the Reason to God, one is especially noteworthy. I refer to its desire for comprehensive and connected views. The Reason is never satisfied with beholding objects separately. By its very nature it is impelled to compare them with one another, to discover their similar or diverse properties, to trace their relations, their respective fitnesses, and their common bearing. And it never rejoices more than when it attains to some great Law, which all things obey, and by which all are bound together. Through this principle we have learned that the sun, earth, and planets form a connected whole, and obey one law called attraction; and, still more, we have risen to the sublime conviction that all the heavenly bodies, countless as they may be, are linked together by mutual dependencies and beneficent influences into one system. Now this tendency to search for connexion and harmony—for Unity—in the infinite variety of nature is a direct tendency to a belief in One God. For this unity of nature manifestly proves, and can only be explained by, unity of thought, design, and intelligent power; that is, it proclaims One Omnipotent, All-comprehending Creator.

(ii.) Look next at the Conscience; and here we see another natural tendency to religion. What particularly strikes us in this principle of our nature, is that it not

only enjoins the law of duty, but intimates that there is a Ruler above us, by whom this Law will be sustained and executed. Conscience speaks not as a solitary, independent guide, but as the delegate of a higher Legislator. Its convictions of right and wrong are accompanied with the idea of an Authority more awful than man's, by which these distinctions will be enforced. That this is the natural suggestion of Conscience we learn from the fact that men in different ages, countries, and conditions have so generally agreed in speaking of the inward monitor as the voice of the Divinity. In approving or condemning ourselves, we do not feel as if we alone are the judges, but we have a presentiment of standing before another tribunal. Especially when we see the wrong-doer prosperous, do we feel as if the injustice of fortune ought to be redressed. We demand an Almighty patron of virtue. Retribution is the claim of our moral nature. So powerful is this tendency of Conscience to assert a righteous Deity, that we cannot escape the sense of his Presence. Often when the guilty have tried to efface the impression of a supreme Lawgiver, the commanding truth has defied their power. The handwriting of the Divinity in the soul, though seemingly obliterated, has come out with awful distinctness in the solemn seasons of life. Thus Conscience is a prophet of religion. And in proportion as it is obeyed, and the idea of Right becomes real and living within us, the existence of the Almighty Friend of virtue is intimately felt, and with profoundest reverence.

(iii.) If we pass next to the Affections, we shall recognize still more clearly that our nature is formed for religion. What is the first affection awakened in the human heart? It is filial love, a grateful sense of parental kindness. And is not this the seed and prime principle of religion? For what is religion but filial love rising to our Father in heaven? Thus the first

emotion of the human heart is virtually towards God. Its first spontaneous impulse is an element of piety.

Another characteristic emotion of our nature is that feeling of Approbation, with which we look on disinterested benevolence. We cannot conceive of a human being quite wanting in this moral principle, whose heart would not expand at witnessing in a fellow-man philanthropy unaffected, unwearied, and diffusing happiness far and wide. Here is another germ of religion. • For what is religion but sympathetic joy in the unbounded beneficence of God? what but this very affection of esteem raised to Him who is the source of all goodwill in men, and before whose glory of disinterested love all other goodness is but a shadow?

I proceed to another affection of our nature which bears strong testimony to our being born of religion. I refer to the emotion which leads us to revere what is higher than ourselves, to wonder at the incomprehensible, to admire the vast, to adore the majestic. There is in human nature an affinity with what is mighty, an awful delight in what is sublime. It is this emotion which draws man to the grandest scenes of nature, to the wilderness and ocean, to thundering cataracts, and the still, solemn mountain top. It is manifested in the interest which the multitude take in persons of commanding intellectual energy, of heroic courage, of all-sacrificing devotion to the cause of freedom and humanity. Men are attracted by no quality so much as by sovereign greatness of will. They love whatever bears the impress of the infinite. So strong is this principle of Reverence, that when fallen from the knowledge of the true God, they have sought substitutes in their own teeming imagination, have deified fellow-men, have invested beings in whom they might concentrate and embody their conceptions, just or unjust, of Supreme dignity. Thus the heart was made for worship, and worship it will. It longs for something

more excellent than it finds on earth. In works of poetry and fiction it continually creates for itself a more than human glory. This emotion of Reverence is a perpetual impulse in the soul towards God.

Another emotion of our nature, and closely related to reverence, next claims regard, as a germ of religion. This is the Love of the Beautiful. Beauty, that mysterious charm which is spread over and through the universe, who is unconscious of its winning attraction? Whose heart has not softened into joy, as he has looked on hill and valley and cultivated plain, on stream and forest, on the rising or setting sun, on the constant stars and the serene sky? Now whenever this love of the beautiful unfolds into strong emotion, its natural influence is to lead up our minds to contemplate a brighter Beauty than is revealed in creation. To them who have eyes to see and hearts to feel the loveliness of nature, it speaks of a higher, holier Presence. They hear God in its solemn harmonies, they behold Him in its fresh verdure, fair forms, and sunny hues. To great numbers, I am persuaded, the beauty of nature is a more affecting testimony to God than even its wise contrivance. For this beauty of the universe is an emblem and revelation of the Divinity, and the love of it is given to guide us to the All-Beautiful.

Thus we see that human nature is impelled by affections of gratitude, esteem, veneration, joy, not to mention various others, which prepare us to be touched and penetrated by the infinite goodness of God, and which, when directed to Him, constitute piety. That these emotions are designed to be devoted peculiarly to the Creator, we learn from the fact that they are boundless in their range and demand an unbounded Object. They cannot satisfy themselves with the degrees of love, intelligence, and power which are found in human beings. They excite the imagination to conceive of higher, richer, ampler excellence than exists on earth.

They delight in the infinite, and never can they find repose but in an Infinite Being, who combines all good.

(iv.) I might easily multiply views of human nature, all tending to show that religion is natural to man. But I will add only that the human soul has two central motive principles, which are specially fitted to raise it to God. There is in all human beings an insatiable desire for Happiness, which can never be appeased in our present existence, which the universe is wholly inadequate to gratify, which becomes only more intense amidst life's sufferings and disappointments, and which is only deepened, expanded, and purified by our highest experience of joy. And there is in refined minds a still profounder and more urgent impulse, already indicated, the longing for Perfection, for deliverance from all evil, for perpetual progress, the desire to realize in character that bright Ideal, of which all noble souls conceive. These aspirations appear wherever men are found, now in sighs and lamentations, now in struggles and ardent efforts. But there is no good on earth that can fulfil their claims. They require an Infinite Blessedness and Perfection; and innumerable weary spirits have they led up to God.

(v.) Thus have I endeavoured to show, by a few illustrations, that all the great principles of human nature are germs of religion, as impulses towards God. If further proof were needed of its congeniality with our nature, I could appeal to facts. Let us ask History then whether religion be natural to men. What principle has acted with equal energy on human affairs? To what principle did all ancient legislators appeal as the foundation of civil institutions? To religion. What principle was it that gave Mohammed the Empire of the East? What principle under the Crusades precipitated Europe into Asia? I grant that these movements arose out of excesses of the religious principle. But we learn by its excesses how deeply planted are its roots in our

nature. And in the largest historic view, what principle is it that has produced in all times and lands the most devoted and fearless martyrs, that has sung hymns of praise in the depths of dungeons, that has smiled with hope on the scaffold, endured without a groan the rack and fire, and refused to accept deliverance when one recanting word would have set the sufferer free? O, the miraculous power of the religious principle in the human soul! How has it led men to forsake the cheerful haunts of their fellow-beings, and to live in solitary cells, that in silence they might open their hearts to God and feel his joy-inspiring presence! What has it not strengthened men to do and to suffer! What speechless sorrows has it not soothed! What strength, peace, hope, has it not breathed into the dying! Yet it is a question whether our nature was formed for religion! The strongest love which the human heart has ever felt has been that for its Heavenly Parent. Was it not then constituted for this love? Where but in God can it find an Object for its overflowing fulness, of reverence and affection, of aspiration and hope?

(3.) My friends, we all possess indeed this capacity for religion. Let us not wrong it by neglect. It is, as we have seen, the central and all-pervading principle of Human Nature. And by proper means it may be cultivated, expanded, and made supreme. To give it life and vigour should be our highest aim. Here is the great field for our activity. By turning our chief energies abroad, we frustrate the end, and defraud ourselves of the proper happiness of our being. The world within is our great domain, worth infinitely more than the world without. To enthrone God in our inmost being is an immeasurably grander aim than to dispose of all outward realms. We boast of the power which we are daily gaining over material nature, how we bend the elements—fire, wind, steam—to our uses; and we look with compassion, if not scorn, on ages when man

did not dream of this dominion. But may not a more fatal ignorance be found among ourselves? There is a loftier power of which we seldom adequately conceive. It is man's power to combine and direct the spiritual elements of his being, his power to free the intellect from prejudice and open it to the influx of truth, his power to disengage the heart from degrading selfishness and to commune with God by disinterested love. This power we all possess, and we should prize it more than life.

By this language I do not mean that we are to exalt our religious character by ourselves alone. I am not so unwise as to claim for men any independent strength. The truth is we cannot learn a science, art, or language, without aid. It is only by help from other minds that we improve our own, or achieve any important enterprise. It is only by help from the mineral world and the elements that we cultivate the land or traverse the sea. And without God's perpetual sustenance we could do absolutely nothing, and should not even exist. I am not teaching man's isolated energy. His power consists in ability to seek and use assistance from nature and from his fellow-creatures. Above all it consists in ability to seek and to use Spiritual Influence from God. This Influence may be gained by aspiration and by effort. It is in truth constantly exerted upon us, even when unsought,—exerted in every dictate, encouragement, warning, reproof of conscience and reason, in every secret longing of the soul for freedom from error and evil and for growth in wisdom and virtue. Aids without measure are offered to us by God. And when I say that love towards God is placed within our reach, I mean that it is so placed by the Inspiration which He incessantly pours on every human being.

What might we not become, were we but just to ourselves and to the means of religious life thus bountifully afforded from heaven! We have all, I trust, a

faith in God, and occasionally recognize our near relation to Him. But we can attain to more than cold belief, to more than formal worship, or to transient emotions of gratitude. The religious principle may become the very Life of our souls. God, now so distant, and perhaps little more than a name, may become to us the nearest and most real of all beings. We may cherish a reverence and attachment to Him more profound and devoted, than the affections with which we embrace parent, and child, and dearest human friends. And through this strength of piety we may gain an immovable strength of moral principle, an unbounded philanthropy and a peace which passeth knowledge. This capacity for religion is a spring of perennial freshness in every human breast. I would not resign it for the gift of countless worlds. It invites us to Him from whom, as a living centre, all suns and systems with their beauty and blessedness shine forth, and of whose glory they are but the dim reflex. We pity the barbarian, in whom intellect and imagination and sensibility slumber. But do not diviner capacities slumber in many of us? Gifted with the power of honouring God and of living with Him in filial intimacy, do we not desert Him and bury our souls in transient cares, distinctions, gains, amusements? Let us retire into ourselves, and become conscious of our own nature and of its high destination. Let us not profanely debase or destroy it. There is an inward suicide more awful than the destruction of the animal life, an inward ruin more mournful than any wrought by the conflagration of cities, or the desolation of whirlwinds. The saddest spectacle in this or in any world is a rational and moral being, smitten with spiritual death, alive only to what is material and earthly, living without God and without hope. Beware of this inward death—this insensibility to the Presence, the Authority, the Goodness of our Heavenly Father.

Do you ask by what means this end of entering into living communion with God can be attained? I answer first: Let us each put forth our best force of Intellect in gaining clearer and brighter conceptions of the Divine Being. We must consecrate our loftiest powers of thought to this sublime Reality. We must not leave to others the duty of thinking for us. We must not be content to look through others' eyes. We must exercise our own minds with concentrated and continuous energy. One chief source of truth for us, in regard to God, is Revelation; and this, accordingly, should claim our most serious and devoted study. But when I thus speak of Revelation, I mean the Christian Religion. In the Jewish Scriptures, though many sublime passages are found in relation to the Supreme Divinity, yet in many others the image given of God is adapted to a rude state of society only, and to a very immature stage of the human mind. And not a few Christians have depressed their idea of the Infinite Being, by conceiving of Him as He was represented in half-barbarous ages, instead of learning to know Him from Jesus, who came to scatter the shades of Judaism as well as of Heathenism, and who alone reveals the Father—or the paternal character of the Creator—in full glory. Again, in studying the Christian Revelation, we must take our views of God from what is clear rather than what is obscure, from the simple teachings of Jesus, rather than from the dark reasonings in some parts of the Epistles. Still more we are to learn the Divine Character in Christianity, not merely from passages which expressly describe Him, but from the character of Jesus Christ, who came to be an image of the Father, and also from the character which Jesus seeks to form in us—that is, from the precepts of this religion; for these are intended to exalt us into the likeness of God. Whoever combines these three sources of knowledge—the express declarations concerning God—the virtues manifested in Jesus,

Christ—and the virtues which he inculcates,—whoever looks to these, for the Character of the Supreme Being, cannot misapprehend its grand features. I have said that our best force of Intellect is to be employed on Revelation. But Revelation is not the only source of spiritual light. The great design of Jesus Christ is to teach us to see God everywhere, in Nature, in Providence, and in the Human Soul. He perpetually points to God's works for instruction, and to his manifestations through humanity. And we cannot comprehend Him aright, if we do not go beyond Revelation, and take lessons in religion from all that we observe, enjoy, and suffer. Jesus came, not to shut us up in a Book, but to open the Universe as our School of spiritual education.

But in teaching you to use the Intellect faithfully and independently in acquiring just views of God, I have given the least important precept. With this we must join obedience to God's Will, so far as we know it, or all intellectual effort will avail us little. We may, indeed, by study, or by living among enlightened people, acquire a just theory in regard to our Creator. But it will be a Theory only. It will be a knowledge of words more than of realities,—a vague superficial apprehension,—unless the mind prepare itself by purifying obedience for an intimate knowledge of God. Moral discipline is much more important than a merely intellectual one, for gaining just apprehensions of the Supreme Being. I beg you to consider this. To know God we must have within ourselves something congenial to Him. No outward light, not the teachings of hosts of angels could give a bad man bright conceptions of God. A man who yields himself up to selfish ambition, to avarice, to sensuality or to sloth, who sears his conscience and hardens his heart is as effectually shutting his mind on the All-Good, as he would deprive himself of the light of the sun by deadening the optic nerve or by destroying the structure of the eye. Intellectual

learning helps a man not a step towards God unless conjoined with inward spiritual discipline—government of the passions, reverence for conscience, and growing development of good principles and affections within. The Infinite Spirit must be revealed to us in the unfolding and operation of our own Spirits, or we shall never truly know Him. For example, God's purity, or aversion to sin, may be read and talked of, but is never understood, until conscience within us is encouraged to reprove all forms of evil. The solemn and tender reproof of this inward monitor alone enables us to know the moral displeasure of the righteous Lawgiver, in whose name and with whose authority it speaks. In the same manner we have a superficial knowledge only of God's goodness, we know nothing of it intimately, until a spirit of love, bearing some resemblance to his own, springs up within; until, through some conquest over the selfish principle, virtuous benevolence begins its work in our minds. This it is that helps us to comprehend the Father, to recognize and respond to that Love, which shines forth from every region of creation. Again, every man who has read the New Testament knows how it teaches that the mind is God's great work, and that it is destined to an immortal existence. But the mere reading of this in a book gives us no conception of the reality. Unless my own spirit makes progress in truth and virtue, and so reveals to me a measure of its power and beauty, I may hear about Immortality, but I shall receive little more than a sound. Nothing external can tell me what a glorious principle the Mind is. The sublimest work of the Creative Mind will be hidden from me. And having in my own heart, nothing which speaks of the Immortal Life, that doctrine will be but a word on my lips. I appeal to you all for a confirmation of this. I ask you whether thousands under the bright light of Christianity are not almost as ignorant, as the heathen, of the true God. Do not a few

commonplaces or trite expressions, about his greatness, goodness and mercy, uttered, in a manner which shows that their meaning is not felt, make up their stock of knowledge on the sublimest realities? No outward teaching can bring us to a vision of the Divine Being. The soul must join with intellectual effort a moral operation upon itself. And Christianity contributes to our knowledge of God, by nothing more than by setting this truth before us, by awakening a consciousness of our infirmities, and by inciting us to obey the conscience in its remonstrances against sin, and its monitions to duty.

Would you then attain to the love of God with all the heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, begin with purifying yourself from all known evil. Let your fervent prayer be to Him to animate you in your conflict with bad passions and habits, and in steadfast obedience to his Will. With this purifying purpose of obedience, read the Scriptures; and the simple passages, in which Jesus speaks of his Father, will open on your minds with new brightness. In this temper study the character of Jesus; and in him, who was the image of the Father, you will learn to see more and more distinctly the fulness and freeness of Divine Benevolence. In this spirit of obedience look on nature, and observe the works of the Creator, and their beauty and harmony will become more touching, till gradually heaven and earth will grow eloquent in their Author's praise. In this spirit look into your own minds, observe what is good and great in the minds of others, and the Infinite Mind will more and more appear to you in his crowning creation, the human soul. And finally, with this purifying purpose of duty, pray for the Divine Spirit, and you will receive it. A secret influence will aid your efforts after oneness with the Holy One. Peace, silent as dew, will distil on you from heaven. I believe too, that with such a temper and life, you may enjoy some-

thing more than distant communications from the Father of Spirits ; that you may be favoured with those blessed seasons of universal light and strength, of which good men have often spoken, 'in which the mind seems warmed by a new flame, and quickened by a new energy from on high, and which, though not miraculous, still bring with them a near consciousness of the Divine Original, and come like the very Breath of God upon the soul. Through these various methods, you will ascend by degrees to a living communion with our Creator, which, however low compared with what awaits you in another life, will yet be lofty in contrast with all you could have conceived of, in the beginning of your religious course.

I close with re-affirming the truth that I have aimed to impress. Religion is not an unnatural or unattainable good. Its germs exist in us all. We have, each of us, the spiritual eye to see, the mind to know, the heart to love, the will, to obey God. We have a Spiritual Nature that may bear the image of Divine Perfection. Glorious privilege ! Let us not cast it away. Let us not waste our souls on perishable objects. For these souls may become Temples for indwelling Divinity. They may even partake of the glory and the blessedness of the living God. May we all, through a just exercise of intellect, and a sincere and purifying obedience, enjoy this gradual illumination and sanctification, which are the beginning of Heaven ! You will then learn how cold is the most earnest language of the preacher, and how inadequately the loftiest human eloquence can unfold the blessedness of a spirit making progress towards fellowship with the All-Perfect One.

GOD REVEALED IN THE UNIVERSE AND IN HUMANITY.

*‘Doth not Wisdom cry? and Understanding put forth
her voice? . . . Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice
is to the sons of man.’—PROVERBS viii. 1 4.*

THE passage from which these words are taken is designed to teach that the truth, which can guide us to Perfection and to Happiness, is teaching us always and everywhere; that God surrounds us constantly with his instruction; that wherever we go the voice of his Wisdom follows us; that it is our own fault if we are not continually becoming wiser and better. This universal presence of Truth is the subject to which I ask your attention. To understand this will help us to understand our whole existence. For it will show us that under every lot we have exhaustless means of growth. And thus it will awaken us to new faithfulness in the use of our privileges, and to new efforts in the pursuit of Goodness.

Wisdom is omnipresent. Everywhere it comes to meet us. It shines in the sun. It irradiates the heavens. It whispers through all sounds of nature. It bears resplendent from the characters of good and wise men, and more brightly still in our own souls. Our teachers are thus all around and within, above and beneath. Divine Wisdom is not shut up within any book. It is not heard from pulpits alone. It has better preachers than

all ministers. And one great aim of the true minister is to help his hearers to understand wiser teachers, than himself, and to open their ears to more harmonious voices. By turning their minds to the lessons of every day, he should make them feel that they are in a higher than any human school,—in God's own School, the School of the Universe,—where always and everywhere they may be gathering treasures of Truth.

Jesus said: 'I am the Light of the World.' And when did he say this? At the moment when he was about to open the eyes of the blind man. To that man he was to be a light. And how? By creating a new light for him? No! The light existed already. The sun was shining on him then in unclouded splendour. A thin membrane was the sole barrier between that blind man and the glorious world which lay around on every side. By lifting this veil Jesus gave him light. In a similar way Jesus Christ is a light to us spiritually. He creates no new truth; for Truth is eternal. And what is still more important, he does not teach truth wholly new to men. The great principles of religion belong to Human Nature; and they are manifested in all God's Works and in his Providence. We live in darkness, not because there is no Sun of Truth shining on and around us. For a spiritual light, brighter than that of noon, pervades our daily life. The cause of our not seeing is in ourselves. The inward eye is diseased or shut. Were that but opened, we should at once be introduced into a Spiritual Universe, fairer and more magnificent than the Creation which burst on the eye of the blind man, when Jesus said: 'Receive thy sight.'

Wisdom is omnipresent. The greatest truths meet us at every turn. Jesus came to reveal the Father. But is God, the Infinite and Universal Father, made known only by a single voice, heard ages ago on the banks of the Jordan, or by the sea of Tiberias? Is it an unknown tongue that the heavens and earth for ever

utter? Is nature's page a blank? Does the human soul report nothing of its Creator? Does conscience announce no Authority higher than its own? Does reason discern no trace of an Intelligence, that it cannot comprehend, and yet of which it is itself a ray? Does the heart find in the circuits of creation no Friend worthy of trust and love? O yes! God is on every side, not only by his essential invisible Presence, but by his manifestations of Power and Perfection. We fail to see Him, not from want of light, but from want of spiritual vision.

The same remark may be extended to Jesus' doctrine of Immortality, though with limitation. The future world indeed is in no way laid open to the senses. But the idea of it is one of the most universally recognized among men. The thought of Immortal Life preceded Jesus. We meet glimmerings of it even in the darkest and most barbarous times. The germ of this great truth is in our Nature; in the Conscience, that includes as one of its elements a presentiment of retribution; in the Reason, that beholds in the present an incomplete destiny, needing to be continued for the fulfilment of its end; in the thirst for happiness, that is too deep to be satisfied on earth, but opens into aspiration towards an infinitely Blessed Being; in the love of moral goodness and beauty, which in proportion as it is cultivated awakens the Ideal of spotless virtue and a desire of community with the All-Perfect One. The voice of our whole nature indeed, properly interpreted, is a cry after higher existence. The restless activity of life is but a pressing forward towards a fulness of good not to be found on earth, and indicates our destination for a state more brightly beautiful than we can now conceive. Heaven is in truth revealed to us, in every pure affection of the human heart, and in every wise and beneficent action, that uplifts the soul in adoration and gratitude. For Heaven is only purity, wisdom, benevolence, joy, peace, in their perfected form. Thus the Immortal Life

may be said to surround us perpetually. •Some beams of its glory shine upon us, in whatever is lovely, heroic and virtuously happy in ourselves or in others. •The pure mind carries Heaven within itself, and manifests that Heaven to all around.

• In saying that the great truths of religion are shining all about and within us, I am not questioning the worth of the Christian Revelation. The Christian Religion concentrates the truth diffused through the universe, and pours it upon the mind with solar lustre. Still more it heals our blindness by exposing the passions and sins, which veil the mind against the light of the Spirit, and furnishing the means to remove the films, which gather over the inward eye and prevent us from seeing the revelations of Nature. We cannot find language to express the worth of the illumination thus given through Jesus Christ. But we shall err greatly, if we imagine that his Gospel is the only light, that every ray comes to us from a single Book, that no splendours issue from God's Works and Providence, that we have no teacher in religion but the few pages bound up in our Bibles. Jesus Christ came, not only to give us his peculiar teaching, but to introduce us to the imperishable lessons which God for ever furnishes in our own and all Human Experience, and in the laws and movements of the Universe. He intends, not that we should hear his voice alone, but that we should open our ears to the countless voices of wisdom, virtue, piety, which now in whispers, now in thunders, issue from the whole of Nature and of Life. He does not give us a narrow system, and command us to bound inquiry within its limits. He does not prison reason by a rigid, formal creed. He gives us generous Principles, which we are to carry out and apply everywhere, and by which we are to interpret all existence. He who studies nothing but the Bible, does not study that book aright. For were it rightly read, it would send him for instruction

to every creature that God hath made, and to every event wherein God is acting. That reader has not read aright the Sermon on the Mount, who has not learned to read sermons in the changes of the seasons and in the changes of human history. Wisdom spoke through Jesus as her chief oracle. She beamed forth from the life and lessons of this divine Saviour, with the pure unsullied glory in which she manifests herself in Heaven. But wisdom does not confine herself to one shrine. Her light is not bounded to a single orb. To the humblest that calls she gives her responses. We live among a host of teachers of moral and religious truth. Unsought, unpaid, they beset our path. Rejected they still plead. They begin their ministry with our first breath ; and they do not forsake us in the last hour.

In these remarks I have again and again referred to two great Teachers, which are always giving us lessons of Wisdom : first, the Outward Universe ; and second, the world of Thinking, Moral Beings. My chief purpose in this discourse is to direct you to the voice of Wisdom that issues from Humanity. But the Revelation of God through Nature shall be briefly considered first.

(1.) The voice of Wisdom—that is of Moral and Religious Truth—speaks to us from the Universe. What a blessing would it be to us, one and all, could we but really wake up to the glory of this Creation, in which we live ! Most men are actually asleep for their life-time in this vast and magnificent world. Mighty changes are going on around them, fitted to entrance their souls in wonder and thankfulness ; and yet they are moved no more than if they were shut up in a mill, seeing only the perpetual revolution of spindles, and hearing only the monotonous hum and clatter of machinery. We might have been born amidst such machinery, had the Creator so pleased. And men's insensibility often seems to deserve no better lot. But

instead of being pent within narrow walls, we live amidst this immeasurable Universe. Instead of a few pale lamps giving only necessary rays, oceans of light daily overflow this planet whereon we dwell, with inexhaustible splendour and beauty. And the fire that sustains the life of earth's creatures is for ever freshly kindled millions of miles away.

If I should be called to express in a word the most important lesson that Wisdom utters in the Creation, I should say it is this. Nature everywhere testifies to the Infinity of its Author. It bears throughout the impress of the Infinite. It proclaims a Perfection illimitable, unsearchable, transcending all thought and utterance. It is modelled and moulded, as a whole and in its least molecule, with grandeur, unfathomable intelligence, and inexhaustible bounty. This is the glory of the Universe. And to behold this is to understand the Universe. Until thus we see the Infinite in Nature, we have not learned the lesson that Wisdom is everywhere teaching. I say that the Infinite is revealed in all things. I do not except the most common. The stone falls to the ground by a force that controls the sun, the planets, and all worlds throughout immensity. Did not the dropping apple reveal to Newton that the very law, which brought that fruit to the ground, keeps the earth in its orbit, and binds creation into one harmonious whole? Behold the humblest wild flower. To produce that weed all Nature has conspired. Into itself it receives the influence of all the elements—light, heat, and air. Sun, earth, and ocean meet to pay it tribute. The least thing in nature acts upon all things, and is acted on by all; so that each implies all and is represented in all. In a word, to understand the simplest work of God, the Universe must be comprehended. For that work, however frail and transient, could not exist, did not all things else exist. It is a living part of this mighty living Universe. It has in,

numerable ties with the limitless Creation—connexions too subtle, swift, and everchanging, for any finite mind to trace. Thus each minutest particle speaks of the Infinite One, and utters the divinest truth which can be declared on earth or in heaven.

Again, there is an impenetrable Mystery in every action and force of the Universe, that envelopes our daily existence with wonder and makes sublime the familiar processes of the commonest arts. How astonishingly does Nature differ in her modes of production from the works of human skill. In a machine of man's making we can trace the motive power, and detect the arrangement whereby this power is transferred from part to part. But in Nature, so vibrating with motion, where is the Moving Energy? Can you discern the all-embracing, all-pervading Force that gives the primal impulse to the moving whole, and perpetuates movement through immensity; that wheels planets and suns in their vast orbits, and at the same instant quickens countless and multiform animals and plants? Look at a grain of wheat! That seed is the fruit of all harvests of past ages since the creation of the world. It carries us back to the hour when the morning stars sang for joy over the newborn earth. In it are centred the combined forces of suns and rains, of soils and climates, for a period of which history has no record. And again, this tiny seed has within it prolific energy to cover whole kingdoms, it may be the whole globe, with vegetation, and to multiply itself without end. On such mysteries as these the science of ages has shed little or no light. What and whence is that principle called Life, to which this seed owes distinctive organic character,—which can modify and counteract the laws of nature, which can mould the plant to symmetric wholeness and unfold it into consummate beauty? Life, that awful power, so endlessly various in the forms it assumes,—Life that fills earth, air, and sea with motion, growth, activity and

joy,—Life that enlivens us, what is it? What sight can discern, what thought explore its mystery? Thus the Infinite, the Mysterious, the Unsearchable meets us, veiled in the lowliest creations. But that which falls within the range of our senses is as nothing compared with the invisible, the intangible, the incomprehensible, that lies beneath. And if Wisdom thus speaks through the minutest existence, what a voice comes to us from the Immensity, wherein we are encompassed!

What blessedness it is to dwell amidst this transparent air, which the eye can pierce without limit, amidst these floods of pure, soft, cheering light, under this immeasurable arch of heaven, and in sight of these countless stars! An infinite universe is each moment opened to our view. And this Universe is the sign and symbol of Infinite Power, Intelligence, purity, bliss, and love. It is a pledge from the Living God of boundless and endless communications of happiness, truth and virtue. Thus are we always in contact, if I may so say, with the Infinite, as comprehended, penetrated, and quickened by it. What unutterable import is there in the teachings of such a Revelation! What a Name is written all through it in characters of celestial light! A spiritual Voice pervades it, more solemn, sublime, and thrilling, than if the roar of oceans, thunders, whirlwinds and conflagrations were concentrated in one burst of praise. The voice is all the more eloquent because it is spiritual; because it is the voice in which the All-Wise speaks to all Intelligences.

(2.) This leads us to consider the voice of Wisdom that utters itself from the Spiritual World, the world of moral and intelligent beings, the Humanity of which we each form a part. This topic is immense. For the book of Human Nature has no end. New pages are added to it every day through successive generations. The moral and religious truths, which Wisdom may draw from the human soul, from human life, from

human experience, cannot be exhausted. From these I shall select one great lesson only, which all history attests. This lesson is that there is in human nature an element truly Divine, and worthy of all reverence; that the Infinite which is mirrored in the outward Universe is yet more brightly imaged in the inward Spiritual World; or, in other words, that man has powers and principles, predicting a destiny to which no bound can be prescribed, which are full of mystery, and even more incomprehensible than those revealed through the material creation.

That this is the lesson uttered continually by Wisdom through what we see familiarly in human life, is a doctrine that may startle some, who think that observation leads to very opposite results. To many persons, history and experience seem to warrant no feelings higher than pity or contempt for their race. The error of these observers should be traced to two sources: first, they do not understand the highest office of Wisdom; secondly, they rest in a half-wisdom which is worse than ignorance. To each of these errors a few words may be given.

(i.) They who disparage Human Nature, do so from ignorance of one of the highest offices of Wisdom. The chief work of Wisdom consists in the interpretation of Signs. To know what is present and visible, merely is to know nothing. The great aim should be to discern what the visible present signifies, what it foreshows, what is to spring from it, what is wrapped up in it as a germ. Wisdom sees the future in the present, for it sees in the present the signs of that future. This actual world may be defined as a world of Signs. What we see is but the sign of what is unseen. Beneath the properties, which meet the eye, lie others incomparably more potent. In life an event is the prophetic sign and forerunner of other coming events; and its importance almost always consists, not in its own independent

character, but in the tendencies and influences which are wrapped up in it, in the future good or ill of which it is the harbinger. These remarks peculiarly apply to Human Nature. For of this it may be said that we know hardly anything but signs. It has merely begun its development. It has taken the first step only in an endless career. Its best emblem is the seed just shooting above the surface of the earth, and struggling to disclose its folded petals. That which man has as yet felt and thought and done is a foretoken only of what he is to feel and think and do. The worth of his best attainment lies in what it prepares for. The present stage in Man's history, studied without reference to his future, would lead to endless error. For his highest improvement is but a hint and faint foreshadow of his destination.

(ii.) The second consideration, by which may be explained the common erroneous estimate of Human Nature, is that most men rest in a half-wisdom, which is worse than ignorance. They who speak most contemptuously of man tell the truth, but only half the truth. The wounds and sores of human nature, which they delight to expose, are real. In condemning human crimes they invent nothing, they exaggerate nothing. History and experience do testify to a wide-spread taint of selfishness and injustice in our Race. They who assert the greatness of human nature do not differ on this point from its vituperators. They do not bandage their eyes. They see as much of guilt as the man of worldly wisdom. But here lies the difference between them and the worldly wise. Amidst the passions and selfishness of men, they see another element—a Divine element, a Spiritual Principle. They see powers and affections always struggling against evil in the human heart, which are celestial in their nature, and which speak of an immortal destiny. In these, they discern the true interpretation of Human Nature, in its origin and its end.

Let us avoid half-wisdom. It is the root of the most fatal prejudice. We wrong individuals not so much by falsely ascribing to them defects, as by taking one-sided views of their characters as a whole. And in the same way we wrong our Race. I am willing to concede to the man of worldly wisdom all his charges against existing society. I will go farther, and tell him that he does not comprehend the depths of actual evil. For to do this requires a moral sensibility to which he has not attained. I have no eulogies to pronounce on the present condition of human nature, in even the most civilized communities. Our whole social fabric needs thorough, searching, complete reform. But I do not stop here. If I did, I should lose the great lesson that Wisdom proclaims from every page of history. This lesson is, that Man, with all his errors, is a wonderful being, endowed with incomprehensible grandeur, worthy of his own incessant vigilance and care, worthy to be visited with Infinite Love from Heaven. The Infinite is imaged in him more visibly than in the outward Universe. This is the great truth to be learned from all our social combinations. This is the germ of all confident and joyful effort for human improvement. It is the very root of Free Institutions. From it alone can spring high-toned moral relations and happy intercourse between men. This truth is the central principle of Christianity, and from failure to recognize this, our existing systems of education, policy, legislation, and social intercourse, are poor, narrow, and impotent. So great a truth is this, which I affirm as being taught from the whole of Man's social life. I know with what incredulity I shall be heard, when thus asserting that the only lesson worth learning from society is the one which as yet has been learned least. And, unhappily, false theology has joined with low worldliness in barring men's minds against its reception. But it is not less true, nor less important, because doubted and denied.

Man really is a mysterious being, endowed with divine powers, and welcomed by a boundless destiny. Such is the truth. And I hold it all the faster for the incredulity of the theologians and men of the world.

Having thus combated the disparaging views so prevalent in regard to Human Nature, and having showed their origin, and proved that the very circumstances which give them birth, if justly interpreted, are sufficient to refute them, I shall next aim to exhibit directly the testimony of human life to the Divine in Man.

The subject is so large that it is best to fix attention on a single point. And I go at once to the most common, though the sublimest principle of man,—the Moral Principle. What is so common as the idea of Right? Where do we not meet with its presence, in all relations of human life,—in all systems of education, in our legislative halls, our historic memorials, our courts of justice, our tribunals of public opinion, our familiar conversation, our private friendships, our humane and religious organizations? The whole of human life is indeed a recognition, in some way or other, of moral distinctions. And no nation has existed, in any age, that has not caught a glimpse at least of the great principles of right and wrong.

The Right, the Just, the Good, the Holy,—these words express an excellence that awakens in us emotions of reverence and esteem altogether distinct, from the impulses we feel towards other forms of Good. Conscience, in enjoining duty, reveals to us its supreme worth. The Right is higher altogether in its essential quality than the profitable, the agreeable, the graceful. It is that which must be done though all other things be left undone, that which must be gained though all else be lost. Other kinds of Good are valued in consequence of their adaptation to our peculiar constitution. But Justice, Goodness, and Right deserve to be valued

for their own sake. It is conceivable that we might have been so framed as to prefer darkness to light, or to find nourishment in what is now poisonous. But a being so constituted as to see baseness in disinterested love and venerableness in malignity, would be an inconceivable monster. In truth, we can no more imagine such a moral being than we can imagine an intelligent being who could think of a part as being greater than the whole. To perceive the Right then is to recognize the Supreme Good, that which is worthy of supreme love, that which not only solicits us by promises of enjoyment, but utters the voice of absolute command and claims sovereign dominion. How sublime then is this principle of Right, and how great the Mind of which it is an element!

Every human being, I have said, has this idea of Right. This is not all. He has not only the idea of Right; but he himself is capable of Rectitude. We are made not only to admire the Right; for the same faculty that discerns it as a Universal Law, proclaims it to be our own Supreme Law. Right is not revealed to us as the glory of unapproachable beings, whom we must reverence at a hopeless distance. It is made known to us with the consciousness that rectitude is bound up with our own lives. This we all feel. No experience is more familiar. And yet nothing more substantially great can be said of the Highest Being in the universe. Is there one among us who has never made a sacrifice to duty, never denied a passion, never foregone a pleasure, never borne a pain, rather than violate the inward law of Right? The power of resisting evil exists in every man, whether he will exercise it or not. The power of clinging to the Good, the Just, the Holy, amidst trial and loss,—we all possess it. And we know that we have it; for we are conscious of our degradation when we fail to use it. This power, so continually put forth by us all against inferior tempta-

tions, is a germ which may be expanded into a divine energy. In some men this celestial might is actually unfolded. And to them we should look, with grateful admiration and affectionate homage, as the true revelations of Human Nature. There have been men in whom the Right, the Good, the Holy, have awakened all-conquering love; in whose spirits high moral excellence, such as was manifested in Jesus Christ, has shone with a brightness above the sun; who have concentrated the whole strength of their nature into the resolve of well-doing; who have grasped and held fast duty with a deliberate energy, which has grown in proportion to the powers arrayed against it; who could not be separated from the Right by tribulation and distress, by persecution or famine, by the rack or the sword. These are the heroes of human history, who give effulgence to the records of the past. Such heroism, though rare, is not superhuman. It is the expansion, the developed form only, of that very power which every man puts forth when he makes the slightest sacrifice to duty. This high rectitude exists as a seed in every heart. It is indeed the very essence of humanity.

In the preceding remarks, I have spoken of the principle of Right in the human heart, as revealing duty to the Individual. I now proceed to another view, which has all along been implied, but which deserves distinct exposition. You perceive what is Right and Good, and feel yourself bound to respect it. But is this all? Does duty reveal itself as a personal obligation merely, or as confined to yourself? Is a rule made known, by which you alone are to walk? When justice, goodness, truth, purity, are urged on you by conscience, is there not a distinct conviction that these are not a merely personal obligation? Do you not at once recognize that a Law of Right is promulgated within you, to which *all* men are subject? Still more,

do you not feel that this great Law of Right binds not only men, but ALL Intelligent Beings; that it is the law not of the earth only, but of the Universe? Does the Right seem to you a transient, arbitrary ordinance which may hereafter be repealed, and to which other beings and men may be strangers? Have you not, on the contrary, an intimate conviction that the Right is as everlasting, as it is universal? Justice, goodness, disinterestedness, truth, purity, love, do you not transport these ideas to Heaven? Are they not in fact the essential elements of your conception of Heaven? Is it not through them that you imagine beings in higher stages of existence? Is not the very idea of a Higher being this, that the elements of Moral Perfection dwell in him in fulness and unity, as they are not unfolded upon earth? Here, then, we learn the greatness of Human Nature. This moral principle—the Supreme Law in man—is the Law of the Universe—the very Law to which the highest beings are subject, and in obeying which they find their elevation and their joy. Then man and the highest beings are essentially of One Order. They form One Family. The same Spirit of Goodness enlivens all. To all there is the same Supreme Law, the same Supreme Good! Imagination and genius, in their most inspired moments, can picture nothing in heaven brighter than Moral Goodness—that very Goodness, of which the germ unfolds in the humblest human heart. This Goodness as seen by us intuitively to be confined to no place, to no time, to be the growth of no nation and of no world, but to be universal, eternal, immutable, absolute, and worthy of highest veneration and love by all Spirits, for ever. Can we, then, look on the human soul, which is at once the oracle and the subject of this Universal and Eternal Law, as created only for time and this narrow earth?

As yet, we have but approached the true greatness of Human Nature. We come now to views of the Soul

which thrill us with transport, for the utterance of which all language is feeble, and towards which all thought is but a faint approximation. Man, though human by nature, is capable of conceiving the Idea of God, of entering into strong, close, tender and purifying relations with God, and even of participating in God's Perfection and Happiness. We hear this great truth unmoved. It is a truth to wake the dead! It ought to exalt our whole life into joy. What I have thus far said is but a preparation for this. I have spoken of the principle of the Right, the Good, the Holy. But without this Idea of God—the PERFECT BEING—the moral principle would pine and die in its conflict with evil. I have spoken of the unbounded tendencies and aspirations of this principle; but without an Infinite Father for their object and support, such aspirations would be vain yearnings, and would soon give room to despair. This moral nature within us, so alive to the Right, is still weak and imperfect, needing to be nourished, fortified and fulfilled by communion with Supreme Excellence. It needs a Perfect Being for its love, an Almighty Being for its trust, an Everlasting Being under whose unchangeable aid it may unfold for ever. It cannot live and move without faith in the Righteous Governor of the Universe, who will repress wrong and reward well-doing with the best of all recompenses, growing strength in highest virtue. Thus the moral nature of man feels after and must find God. The reason, why men see God in the outward creation, is that their own Nature has an affinity with Him, and cannot be unfolded or find repose without Him. We comprehend and desire Him, because we carry his image in our Moral and Intellectual Powers, and because these tend to their Source. Is there nothing great then in Human Nature? Within it is wrapped up this Idea of God; it is carried to Him by inward impulses and wants. It sees in the outward creation

God's Omnipotence. But it hears in its own conscience the voice of God's Authority. It feels itself vitally related to God, not merely like matter by physical dependence, but by a moral law. It has a consciousness of accountableness to Him, which in its degradation even it cannot throw off. It can reverence God, and still more it can love Him. Is there no grandeur in such a Nature? There can be no higher Idea in the universe than this of God. There can be no greatness like that of adoring Him, of harmony with his Goodness, of concord with his Will. This adoration, this concord are not only within man's power, but they are the very end of his being; and in no other destiny can we find rest and joy.

It is true that the Idea of God has been mournfully obscured by human passions. Still amidst the ruins of man's religious nature some celestial fire has slumbered. And particularly interesting is it to observe, how the consciousness of some divine element in human nature has mingled with the grossest superstition. Thus we witness, widely spread among heathen nations, the practice of deifying distinguished men—legislators, patriots, heroes. But why were the greatest and best on earth believed to be raised to heaven? Because the illustrious of the race were thought to be of the same family with the gods. There was gross superstition in this worship offered to the dead. But beneath that error, as beneath most errors, lay a great truth. In that widespread practice, the *affinity* between God and Man was dimly shadowed forth. Therein appeared that truth, which has since shone out so brightly in the union of the Human and the Divine, in the character of Jesus Christ. How sublimely great is man, when thus regarded as a Spiritual Being in fellowship with the Infinite Spirit! Within him is enshrined the Idea of God. He calls God his Father.

And now it may be asked, what are the practical uses of these views? I answer, the greatest of all truths are the most quickening. And to nothing so much as to the obscurity, that eclipses them, is the low standard of the Christian world to be traced. Again is it asked, why I am so anxious to declare these views of human nature now? I answer, I prize these views because they confirm my faith in Jesus Christ, and give reality to the great hope that Christianity sets before us. Jesus came, as he taught us, to create men after the likeness of God, to breathe into men a divine virtue, and to prepare them for the heavenly life. The sceptic derides this good as unreal, because wanting in adaptation to our nature. But I look into human nature and cannot but feel that a being made for such a destiny, as Christianity reveals, must carry within him tokens pre-signifying his end. It is a joyful confirmation of my faith, then, to find in the human soul plain signatures of a Divine Principle, to find faculties allied to the attributes of God, faculties beginning to unfold into God's image, and presages of an immortal life.

Another practical use of the views now given of human nature is this. In proportion as they are received, they will transform essentially our modes of relationship, communication, and association with our fellow-beings. They will exalt us into a New Social Life. Indeed, they will give an entirely new character to social intercourse. That intercourse must be determined by the estimate we form of human nature. He, who looks on man as little better than a brute, will live with men as brutes. He will be wanting in reverence for their rights and feelings. He will think only of making them his instruments. He will be anxious chiefly to raise himself above them by outward distinctions. He will care little how they are trampled under foot. He will scoff at the thought of living and dying for their happiness. Society is now degraded through

all its laws, institutions, and customs, by the blindness of men to the Divine Principle within themselves, and one another. Once diffuse this great truth through society, and it will work a mightier revolution than politicians ever dreamed of. It will ennoble all social duties. It will give sanctity to all social relations. It will breathe a deference and tender respect through manners, which will put to shame what now passes for courtesy. It will bring an end to that outward, ostentatious, superficial life, on which so many squander time, means, thought and their best powers. It will awaken an intense effort for distressed humanity. It will send far and wide a spirit of reform, from the nursery to the hall of legislation. It will substitute the holy tie of Human Brotherhood for all artificial bonds of social order. With this great truth in his heart a man cannot insult a fellow-man, for he beholds the Divine in the Human. He can call no being low in whom his own highest powers and affections are wrapped up. Can you conceive, then, of a truth so practical as this doctrine of the greatness of man as a moral being? It will create a New Earth.

And finally, to speak of its highest use, how would this doctrine, brought home to the heart, transform our fellowship with God! Time is wanting to unfold this great subject now. It has never as yet been fitly unfolded. For want of an enlightened conviction of man's participation in a Divine Principle, religion in all ages has sunk more or less into superstition. It has bowed down to spirits which it ought to have uplifted. It has been deemed a means of propitiating a Higher Power, instead of being regarded as the ascent of the Soul to its Original, as the Divine in man seeking the Supreme Divinity, as a homage changing us into the Goodness we adore, and strengthening our disinterested love of fellow-beings with a celestial Life. How earnestly to be desired is it, that religion should be thus raised from

selfish superstition into generous communion with God. And never can it attain to this its true glory; till man shall better comprehend himself as a Child of God, and the filial relationship, inherent in his very nature, between himself and the Father of Spirits.

My friends, how little do we know ourselves! How unjust are we to ourselves! We study everything else but the Divine Principle within our own persons. The truth may be on our lips. But in how few hearts does it live! We need a new revelation—not of Heaven or of Hell—but of the SPIRIT within ourselves.

THE FATHER'S LOVE FOR PERSONS.

'Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.'

LUKE xii. 7.

HOW ought we to live with our Creator—as strangers or as children? How are we to worship Him—as a distant being or as near to us? What is his relation to us—that of a remote Sovereign, who takes no immediate and special care of individuals, or that of a Parent, who, whilst provident of his whole family, watches over every particular child?

These are great questions, and happily our Religion answers them fully. However indistinct Nature's teachings may be upon these points—however insufficient unassisted reason may be to establish the truth of a minute and constant Providence, extended to each single creature—however strong may be the appearances of a general order of the Universe, to which the interests of private individuals are sternly sacrificed—still, as Christians, we are assured that God in his government of the whole does not forget the parts, that he is the Father of *each*, as well as of *ALL* intelligent beings.

It is the perfection of wisdom—the distinction of an All-comprehensive Mind—to embrace at once the concerns of a vast community of beings and the interest of every single member, to conjoin the enlarged views of a Universal Sovereign with the minute inspection and tender care of a Father. And such is our God. He is the God of *ALL*, and yet He is *my* God. At the same

moment He pervades heaven and earth, taking charge of the sustenance, progress, and growing happiness, of the unbounded creation, and he is present with me, as intent upon my character, actions, wants, trials, joys, and hopes, as if I were the sole object of his love.

This view of God we all have a deep interest in impressing on our minds. We must strive to combine, in our conception of Him, the thoughts of a particular and a universal Providence. On the one hand, we must not narrow his loving care, as if it were mindful of ourselves alone, nor think of Him only as doing us good. For this would be to rob Him of his Infinitude, and darken the splendour of his boundless beneficence. Such a view would make religion the nurse of selfishness, and convert our connexion with the Supreme Being into one of self-interest. Never let us try to monopolize God. Never let us imagine that God exists only as administering to our individual wants. Never let us for an instant forget his relation to the Universe. Let us adore Him for the streams of bounty which flow unceasingly from the fountains of his life, to all his countless creatures. But on the other hand, beware lest in thus enlarging your views of the Infinite One, you lose your hold of the correlative truth—that though all beings of all worlds are his care, though his mind thus embraces the Universe, He is yet as mindful of you, as if that Universe were blotted out, and you alone survived to receive the plenitude of his care. God's relation to you is not an exclusive one, but it is as close as if it were. Judge not of the Infinite Mind by your own. Because you, frail men, when you extend your care over a city, a community, or a nation, overlook the concerns of individuals through incapacity of comprehending in one view the vast and the minute, the whole and its particles, do not then imagine that the Infinite Spirit cannot be perpetually caring for you, because He cares for the immense community of Spirits. Never conceive that

your actions are overlooked and forgotten, because of the multiplicity of agents and beings who are to be guided and governed. Never fear that your wants are forgotten, because the boundless Creation sends up a cry to its common Father, and He has an infinite Family for whom to provide. Never think that your characters are objects of little interest, because innumerable orders of beings of higher attainments and virtues attract the regards of this munificent King. Were you his only creature alive, He could not think of you more constantly and tenderly, or be more displeased with your resistance to duty, or feel more joy in your fidelity to right, than He does now.

The human mind, apt to measure God by itself, has always found a difficulty in reconciling the two views which have just been stated. Through this propensity it fell into Polytheism, or the worship of many gods. Wanting a Deity, who would watch over their particular interests, and fearing that they would be overlooked by the Father of all, men invented inferior divinities, gods for each particular country and nation,—and still more household gods, divinities for each particular dwelling, that they might have some Superior Power beneath which to shelter their weakness. Under Christianity even the same difficulty has been and still is felt. To this we must ascribe the exaltation of Saints into divinities in the Catholic Church. And among Protestants, not a few make the Universal Father a partial deity, and appropriate his blessings to their sect, as if fearing that they should lose a portion of his favour, by supposing Him to be as gracious to all human beings as to themselves.

(1.) But there is no inconsistency in at once believing in God's Particular Providence and in his Universal Providence. He may watch over all, and yet watch each, as if each were all. There is a simple truth, which may help us to understand, that God does not

intermit his attention to Individuals in consequence of his inspection of the Infinite Whole. It is this. The individual is a *living* part of this *living* whole, vitally connected with it,—acting upon it and reacted upon by it,—receiving good, and communicating good in return, in proportion to his growth and power. From this constitution of the Universe it follows, that the whole is preserved and perfected by the care of its parts. The general good is bound up in the individual good. So that to superintend the one is to superintend the other; and the neglect of either would be the neglect of both. What reason have I for considering myself as overlooked, because God has such an immense family to provide for? I belong to this family. I am bound to it by *vitul* bonds. I am always exerting an influence upon it. I can hardly perform an act that is confined in its consequences to myself. Others are affected by what I am, and say, and do. And these others have also their spheres of influence. So that a single act of mine may spread and spread in widening circles, through a nation or humanity. Through my vice, I intensify the taint of vice throughout the Universe. Through my misery I make multitudes sad. On the other hand, every development of my virtue makes me an ampler blessing to my race. Every new truth that I gain makes me a brighter light to Humanity. I ought not then to imagine that God's interest in me is diminished, because his interest is extended to endless hosts of Spirits. On the contrary, God must be more interested in me on this very account, because I influence others as well as myself. I am a living member of the great Family of All Souls; and I cannot improve or suffer myself, without diffusing good or evil around me through an ever-enlarging sphere. My hearer, you are not to think of yourself as neglected; because God has an innumerable company of children to care for. One of the methods, by which He cares for these various children, is to make

provision for your progress. The interests of others, as well as your own interests, require that the Universal Father should watch over your progress. For just so far as you are wise, disinterested, and happy, you will become a universal blessing. Be not disheartened then by looking round on the immense Creation, and thinking that you are but one among millions; for these millions have a *living* interest in each one. You as an individual cannot but spread good or evil indefinitely around you, and through succeeding generations.

In these remarks we have seen that, from the intimate and vital connexion between the individual and the community of spirits, God in taking care of each person is taking care of the whole, and that there is a perfect harmony between the general and the particular superintendence of God. From the same *vital* connexion of beings, I derive another encouraging view, leading to the same result. I learn from it that God's attention to his whole Creation, far from withdrawing his regard from Me, is the very method whereby He is advancing my especial good. I am organically connected with the great Family of the Universal Parent. Plainly then it is for my happiness, that this Family should be watched over and should prosper. Suppose the Creator to abandon all around me, that He might bless me alone, should I be a gainer by such a monopoly of God's care? My happiness is manifestly bound up with and flows from the happiness of those around; and thus the Divine kindness to others is essentially kindness to myself. This is no theory; it is the fact confirmed by all experience. Every day we receive perpetual blessings from the progress of our race. We are enlightened, refined, elevated, through the studies, discoveries, and arts of countless persons, whom we have never seen, and of whom we have never even heard. Daily we enjoy conveniences, pleasures, and means of health and culture, through advancements

in science and art, made in the most distant regions. And in so far as we possess elevated, disinterested, and holy characters, or enlarged intelligence, have not these been cherished and encouraged by the examples, writings, deeds, and lives of far-spread fellow-beings, through all ages and nations? How much would each of us assuredly be advanced in happiness, wisdom, virtue, were the community around us—were all the persons with whom we hold intercourse—more humane and more heavenly! Is God then neglecting us in his care of others? How could He bless us more effectually than by carrying forward the great spiritual system, to which we belong, and of which we are living parts? We may well believe that so close and vital are the connexions throughout God's universe—between this world of ours and other worlds—that the Human Race is benefited by the progress of all other Orders of Beings. So that the Creator is providing for your happiness and virtue, in the care which he extends over the diverse systems of worlds around, and over the higher ranks of Spirits in the Heavens. This happiness we may, indeed we do, lose by vice—by a spirit of self-love—hostile alike to the Creator and to his creatures. But this will be our self-imposed doom. Such isolation will not come from neglect on the part of our Heavenly Father. For He designs to make us all blessed beings together, in a blessed universe.

(2.) Thus having seen how consistent is the doctrine of God's care for the whole with the doctrine that He watches minutely over every Individual, let me now ask you to look at this doctrine more closely, in its practical applications. Consider what affecting ideas it involves! According to this truth, we are, each one of us, present to the mind of God. We are penetrated, each one of us, instant by instant, by his all-seeing eye; we are known, every single person of us, more interiorly by Him, than we are known to ourselves. Moment by

moment, the Living God sustains us; and his own Life continually flows into us through his omnipotent good-will. Moment by moment, He intends and does us good; and no blessing comes to us without his immediate loving purpose. In fine, and above all, the Holy One never loses sight of our character and conduct. He is present to inspire sentiments, suggestions, motives, and to grant us aids and opportunities, for spiritual growth. He witnesses and delights in our virtues. And He too witnesses and condemns every sin. Let us never be unmindful of this last view. Because God is always near, intending and doing us good, we must not imagine that his relation to us will secure our happiness, if we are unworthy in spirit and in life. It is true, that nothing but good can come from God. But never let us forget that this very good may be turned into evil, through our perverseness. Let us remember—it is a solemn truth—that from our very nature our happiness is entrusted to our own keeping. We are endowed with that awful power of Free-Will, without which virtue cannot be. For ourselves we must determine, whether God's gifts shall fulfil their end in promoting happiness, or whether they shall be turned into bitterness and woe. There is not one blessing in existence, not even God's choicest gift, which may not through our neglect, abuse, and perversity, become a source of misery. So that God's connexion with us, intimate as it is, is yet no pledge of happiness, without our own concurrence.

Intimate and tender, beyond our highest conception, is our Heavenly Father's relationship to us! He is incessantly our creator and renewer, our upholder and benefactor, our witness and judge. The connexion of all other beings with us, when compared with this, is foreign and remote. The nearest friend, the most loving parent, is but a stranger to us, when contrasted with God. No words can adequately express this *living* alliance of the Creator with his creatures. Our bodies

are less closely united with our minds, than is God with our inmost self. For the body may be severed from the soul without working its destruction. But were God to forsake this thinking principle, it would instantly perish. How near to me is my Creator! I am not merely surrounded by his influence, as by this air which I breathe. I am pervaded by his agency. He quickens my whole being. Through Him am I this instant, thinking, feeling, and speaking. And knowing thus the intensity and the extent of this relationship, how is it possible that I can forget Him!

My hearers, I have thus turned your attention to this sublimely affecting subject of our vital connexion with God, not for the purpose of awakening temporary fervour, but that we may feel the urgent duty of cherishing these convictions. If this truth becomes a reality to us, we shall be conscious of having received a **NEW PRINCIPLE OF LIFE**. The man who has begun to understand, believe, and feel, that *he*, as a Person, is an object of perpetual regard to the Infinite Creator, and that the Supreme Being takes a personal interest, not merely in his present welfare, but in his everlasting progress, has attained to vastly higher regions of thought and emotion, than one who is aware only of his connexion with the outward, mutable world, can even conceive of. Were a person, who had lived in ignorance of all beyond mere sensitive existence, suddenly to receive a clear impression of God's all-embracing Presence, he would undergo a greater change of condition, than if he were to awake some morning in a wholly new world, peopled by new beings, clothed in new beauty, and governed by laws such as he had never known by experience. He would be uplifted with the assurance, that at length he had found for his soul an All-sufficing Object of veneration, gratitude, trust and love, an unfailing source of strength for every mortal weakness, an exhaustless refreshment of his highest

hope, an ever-springing fount of holy emotion, virtuous energy and heavenly joy, infinitely transcending all modes of good, to which he had been wont to look. In a word, he would be utterly transformed.

On the other hand, in degree as by faithlessness I lose sight of my intimate relationship with God, I am bereft of inward peace, of the desire for progress, of power to escape from myself. The future grows dim, and hope dies. A charge comes over me like that which befalls the traveller, when clouds overspread the sky, when gathering mists obscure his path, and gloom settles down upon his uncertain way, till he is lost. The light of life is a constant consciousness of Divine Fellowship. But we should not expect a sudden manifestation of the Infinite One to our souls. Gradually we must attain to this serene trust in God's all-protecting care, incessant mercy, and inspiring influence. The blessing will not be less real, because it comes upon us gently, according to our spiritual progress. There is no rest for our souls except in this ever-growing communion with the All-Perfect One.

(3.) How then can we attain to an abiding consciousness of living relationship with the Living God? How can we reach the constant feeling that He is always with us, offering every aid consistent with our freedom, guiding us on to heavenly happiness, welcoming us into the immediate knowledge of his perfection, into a loving fellowship with Himself? Some one may say: 'I am conscious of having thus far lived very much as if there were no God. My mind is dull, my heart is cold. How shall I awake to perceive, to feel, to love, to serve, to enjoy this Living God of whom you speak?' There is time for but a brief reply; and I shall confine myself to what seems to be essential, as the *first* step, in this approach to true Communion with the Father of Spirits.

My belief is that one chief means of acquiring a vivid

sense of God's Presence is to resist, instantly and resolutely, whatever we feel to be evil in our hearts and lives, and at once to begin in earnest to obey the Divine Will as it speaks in conscience. You say that you desire a new and nearer knowledge of your Creator. Let this thirst for a higher consciousness of the Infinite Being lead you to oppose whatever you feel to be at war with God's Purity, God's Truth, and God's Righteousness. Just in proportion as you gain a victory over the evil of which you have become aware in yourself, will your spiritual eye be purged for a brighter perception of the Holy One. And this in its turn will strengthen you for a yet more strenuous resistance of sin,—which will prepare you for still more intimate acquaintance with the Divine Nature and Character. This attainment to a knowledge of God and this instant resistance of Sin are most intimately and vitally related. Neither can advance beyond the other. For God, as the All-good, can be known only through our own growing goodness. No man living in deliberate violation of his duty, in wilful disobedience to God's commands as taught by conscience, can possibly make progress in acquaintance with the Supreme Being. Vain are all acts of worship in church or in secret, vain are religious reading and conversation without this instant fidelity. Unless you are willing to withstand the desire which the inward monitor, enlightened as it always is by this Divine Spirit, condemns, you must, you will, remain a stranger to your Heavenly Father. Evil passions and sensual impulses darken the intellect and sear the heart. Especially important is it—indispensable indeed—that self-indulgence and self-will shall be determinedly withstood. While these enthral us, never can we comprehend the true glory of God. For his glory is Perfect Love. If we would have our souls become the temples of the Supreme Being, filled with his light and joy and peace, we must utterly cast out the foul spirits which are

at enmity with the Divine purity and disinterestedness.

Would you really know your Creator, would you become truly penetrated with the consciousness of his Presence, would you become indeed alive to his Goodness, then show your sincerity by beginning at once an unflagging warfare with that habit, that passion, that affection, be it what it may, which conscience this moment assures you is hostile to God's Will. You need not go far to learn how you may gain more vivid views of God. The sin that now rises to memory as your *bosom sin*, let this first of all be withstood and mastered. Oppose it instantly by a detestation of it, by a firm will to conquer it, by reflection, by reason, and by prayer. Such a spiritual conflict, trifling though it may appear, will do more than can all other influences combined to fit you for a near, strong, affectionate intimacy with your God. And without such a struggle of your will—which is but another name for Repentance—you can never draw a step nearer to the All-Holy and All-True. He will always be to you a God afar off, wrapt in clouds of terror. It is customary to recommend reading the Bible, religious worship, meditation, as means of awakening religious sensibility, and they are all important as means. I would on no account disparage them. Use them all. But use them in connexion with this primary obedience to conscience, this resolute resistance of your peculiar temptations. For without this all other means of religious discipline will but mock you. They may generate a temporary fervour, and kindle an occasional flash of devout feeling. But such religious emotion will be but local and transient, sinking into gloom when you most need its guiding light, never brightening to full day, nor filling the firmament of your soul with noontide peace.

My friends, in this discourse I have spoken to you of the great Truth, that the Infinite God is for ever

around and within each one of you ; that our Heavenly Father is interested *personally* in each one of you ; that the Author of the Universe is as near to you as your very life ; that the Giver of all good is incessantly doing you good. By comprehending this Truth you can gain the means of happiness, such as the whole world cannot give, and which no change in existence can take away : Incorporate it with your character. Let it call forth your love and trust in their intensest energy. And you will have found a resource, refuge, treasure, a fount of strength, courage, hope, and joy truly inexhaustible. Earnestly strive then to open your inmost souls to the influence of the Infinite Being, till you are filled with his fulness. Are there none here in whom this touching truth of an Everlasting Father always and instantly sustaining and quickening, recreating and renewing us, lies dormant ; to whom reason, conscience, nature, tradition, the words of Jesus, the calls of countless blessings, speak ineffectually to rouse their gratitude to the Almighty Friend, from whom all blessedness flows forth ? One day, such hardness of heart towards the 'Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift,' will appear to us, what, it really is, as the heaviest guilt that a free and intelligent creature can contract. As you love your immortal souls, withstand its fatal sway. The doom it brings is spiritual death. Seek aid from Heaven instantly and for ever to subdue it. Let the Living God be supreme in your thoughts and hearts, as He is supreme in the universe. Consecrate to Him unreservedly the Spirits which He called into being, that He might make them perfectly one with Himself.

LIFE A DIVINE GIFT.

'Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; thus we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.'—1 CORINTHIANS ii. 12.

NO truth is more fitted to touch our hearts than the doctrine of our entire Dependence upon God as the Giver of life. It sets before us a Goodness, from which countless blessings incessantly proceed, and a Power that can instantly withhold them. It implies the most tender and intimate relationship between ourselves and the Greatest of Beings. It impresses on every good of existence the character of a Gift. It awakens us to habitual thankfulness. It rebukes the hard heart, that lives unmindful of the all-sustaining Father. It utters remonstrance and warning against contempt of his gracious laws. It teaches that all other beings are as nothing to us, compared with this Infinite One, 'who is above all and through all and in all.' And it summons us to cherish a devoted love for our Divine Benefactor, more ardent, and more constant, than to any other friend.

This conviction of our Dependence, though so important, does not spring up spontaneously and fix itself without effort in the mind. God does not intend that we shall come to Him by compulsion. We must watch over pious impressions and cultivate them, or they will never become vigorous and enduring. There is, in the very constitution of the world, an important law, that is

to a degree unfavourable to our consciousness of dependence. No doubt, among other purposes, it was intended to be a part of our discipline—a trial to call forth our vigilance. The law is this:—God has so formed us, that most of the goods of life require on our part exertion to secure their attainment. Generally the rude material is given, and the means of fashioning it to our use; but without our co-agency, our enjoyment of nature is unspeakably lessened. The purpose of this arrangement is obvious. It has a tendency to call forth our faculties. Such a world is an admirable school for intellectual and active beings. Our powers of invention, our resolution, perseverance, courage, enterprise, patience, energy are taxed to the utmost and grow by exertion. And thereby we receive a gratification far nobler than any passive pleasure can be—that of hope blended with fruition. Most wise is this method of Providence. Let us be grateful for it. But exertion, and especially prosperous exertion, begets the consciousness of Power, and too often the notion of independent power. Surrounded by a visible creation, on which we act with success, we call ourselves its lords and forget its Creator and Upholder. Our own will seems to work out our welfare. And selfishness magnifies our agency, till self-idolatry creeps in to poison all life's blessings.

There is one plain thought well suited to repress this pernicious working of pride. True, we do owe our enjoyments in a sense to our own efforts,—that is, without exertion we should not gain them. But after all, how small a proportion of the work of promoting our happiness do we perform. How little of the good can we trace to our hands. We sow the seed, which another Power has created, into that earth which another Power has spread around us. We add a little culture, and here we stop. But how much must intervene between this exertion and gathering the ripened fruit! How many suns must rise and set, how many dews and rains distil!

And what part in all these processes is due to our puny selves? Can our voice reach the clouds, and command one drop to fall on the parched earth? Is it through our direction that the root projects its tendrils through the soil—that the light stalk springs up—and the flower unfolds its beauty to the sun and sheds its fragrance through the air? In like manner, we hew from the forests, which were growing ere our birth, materials for our ships, and exult in our prosperous voyages. But does the sea with its tides and currents flow by our control? Are the winds our ministers? And do the products of other climes grow through our influence? Thus the present system is beautifully contrived to give a field for exertion, and yet to inculcate the lesson of dependence. Our blessings come through our own labour; but they have connexions so immense, and are influenced by causes so entirely removed from our guidance, that our dependence is taught in the very moment of overflowing triumph. This lesson is taught, however, only to those who are disposed to learn. God forces wisdom upon none. We may live, not recognizing his Power, and idolizing our own; and thus turn our very effort into crime, and our blessings to a curse.

My friends, how can I aid you in deepening this sense of Dependence? Let me enumerate a few of our best known blessings, to show the witness which they bear to a Higher Power than our own, for ever sustaining us.

(1.) *Health* is a priceless blessing. It is often called the greatest of blessings; and we are told that without it life has no worth. This language is too strong. It has been my happiness to know those who, amidst infirmity and frequent illness, through force of intellect, and still more through religious principle, devout gratitude and trust, have found life a greater boon than the multitude of the strong and healthy ever dream of. Still, Health is an estimable good, and is

essential to the full development and gratification of our powers. When possessed without interruption, however, it is peculiarly apt to beget thoughtless presumption and proud self-confidence. Yet one may justly wonder how the healthiest even can for a moment forget the Giver of Life; for hardly a blessing can be named so little under our control as health. True, temperance and observance of sanitary laws undoubtedly may protract existence, if we consider human society on a large scale. But the individual has in his temperance no pledge of safety. Health is the harmony, balance, and well-proportioned action of innumerable organs, fibres, nerves, muscles, blood-vessels, membranes, of which most men know comparatively nothing. And a casual derangement in some minute cell, which we cannot discern, and of which we never heard, may begin the work of destruction that will lay the strongest in his grave. A tiny nerve, so slightly wounded that the microscope cannot detect the injury, will rack the whole body with agony. Who of us can look within this complex frame; and discover the first faint flush of an inflammation, that is soon to become a hectic burning on the cheek, and a consuming fire in the lungs? Who can trace out, in some subtle vessel unconsciously ruptured, the elements of disease and dissolution? We go forth exultant, and quicken our blood by the glow that health pours through our limbs; and yet we find, in the very freshness of the air, ordinarily so invigorating, a check of some vital function, and date fatal illness from the chance breath of a north wind.

And health is not the prey of these obvious risks only. There is something inexplicable in its subtle changes. Suddenly we sicken, we know not why or how. Languor creeps over us. We feel as a burden our common labours. The relish for food, air, exercise, recreation is blunted. Life loses its bright charm, and gradually declines by mysterious decay. Does the sight

of such sudden changes stir us up to new vigilance; and do we hope, by increased care, to escape the common danger? Then this very anxiety becomes a worse peril than those we seek to shun. Timidity as to our health not only may subject us to imaginary illness, but bring on real disease. The hypochondriac, shrinking from every breeze, weighing his food, and fearing exhaustion from fatigue, loses all animation. And by flight he meets sooner the death he dreads. The continuance of health to beings so delicately and exquisitely framed, and plunged among so many sources of disease, is indeed a constant miracle. It ought to affect us deeply. A day, closed without suffering, should be to us an affecting witness of God's loving care. And we should wake each morning with something of the emotion that a new Gift of Life would call forth. It is really God who gives us health. To his inflowing energy we owe the vigorous muscle, the strong arm, the firm tread. Through his all-quickening aid do we walk abroad to find the air balmy, mere motion pleasure, occupation attractive, society cheering, and our common existence a continual joy.

My hearers, do not let health generate self-reliance. Receive it, and use it gratefully as God's Gift. Young man, abuse not and waste not in excess, that should make you blush, this Divine blessing. To you, let the elastic step, bloom on the cheek, the bright eye, the smooth brow, and delight in fresh existence, speak of God the Giver. Thank Him for health. Consecrate it as his trust to innocent enjoyment, manly effort, social usefulness, and preparation for an honourable and holy career.

(2.) Our dependence upon God, the Giver, for *Property*, is the next topic that suggests itself. This is so trite a theme that one has hardly courage to touch upon it. Men have heard from their birth that riches 'take wings and fly away.' The instability of human

fortune has been the commonplace of moralists. All lands and ages have seen flourishing families reduced to want, and the once wealthy compelled to beg the aid which they before bestowed. And such vicissitudes have been set forth in popular proverbs, and by prophets and poets, as monuments of Providence, to teach men not to trust in uncertain riches, but to use them as talents lent, which are to be accounted for. Would that a truth so plain needed no enforcing! But among ourselves wealth still feeds presumptuous pride. The rich man is described, by distinction, as 'independent.' And the multitude toils for wealth, as the means of 'independence.' That property is in no measure under human influence, or that industry, prudence, caution, can do nothing to gain and secure it—we need not affirm, for the purpose of teaching dependence. Men undeniably do something towards determining their own fortunes. But let the most prosperous man look back, and he will confess how much of his success must be ascribed to seeming accident,—that is, to unlooked-for propitious coincidences. How often do enterprises, which inspired most hope, fail; whilst others, from which little was anticipated, become the foundation of princely opulence! You have 'succeeded' through life! And why? Because you came into life at a happy season. You took the tide at its influx. And if that moment had been lost, no effort, however strenuous, could have brought back the golden opportunity. Some great public event, over which you had no control, forwarded your private plans. An earlier occurrence of a storm, the failure of others in business, a commercial revulsion, a war, might have involved you in inextricable embarrassment. Others as sanguine as yourself, whom perhaps your success emboldened, entered on the same field of enterprise, to reap only disappointment and penury.

The mode of acquiring Property, which is most common in our large cities—trade—has well been called a

'lottery.' And although trade is made more insecure than it need be through the spirit of rash adventure, yet when conducted with utmost sobriety, it is still of necessity a sphere of constant hazard. The calculations which it requires are too extensive and complicated for the largest mind to grasp. And the laws of consumption and supply are so intricate, that the most judicious may err. Thus Property has found in all times its fittest symbol in the fluctuating ocean, upon whose breast so much of it is won. The progress of society has as yet done little to make property secure. Providence has appointed, apparently, that with wealth's increase its tenure should become more unstable, as if thus to teach more powerfully man's dependence. Formerly, there was less wealth among us, but it was more sure and steadfast. There were fewer overgrown fortunes, and smaller incomes; but property being chiefly in real estate, and invested in houses or lands, underwent fewer fluctuations. Now, by improvements in machinery, the increase of personal property, the vast development of credit, and the extension of commerce, the pecuniary connexions of men and of communities are becoming indefinitely multiplied. The complexity of business is increased. Vast operations, requiring the joint means and efforts of multitudes are carried on with ever-augmenting speed, and competition is inflamed almost to madness. The result of this extensive intercourse, and of these widespread connexions and dependencies, is, that the property of the humblest as well as the highest is affected by political, social, industrial events in every quarter of the civilized world. A single bankruptcy may give a shock to commercial centres that is felt in every home throughout all nations. Every man is now affected by what are called 'the times'—a significant word, so well expressing the changing state of the community. Commercial depressions and panics spread distress far and wide. The suspension of great

establishments reduces to idleness crowds of resourceless labourers. And the largest capital of persons and communities is dispersed more rapidly even than it was accumulated. Thus fortunes rise and fall, like billows in a storm-tossed sea. Hence the prevalent anxiety about property,—an evil that makes so serious a deduction from the comforts gained by our improved condition in the productive arts and in commerce.

Such evils and trials surely should deepen a spirit of reliance on the overruling Providence of God. A scene of such vicissitude is certainly a school to teach dependence. In a world so inconceivably complex, success should be religiously referred to the Supreme Power. The rich man should feel that it is God who has made him to differ in his lot from his poorer brother, and apportioned alike his duties and his privileges. Wealth should be held as a *trust* from the great Proprietor. We should remember that what we properly call our own in reference to fellow-creatures, is not *our own* in reference to our Creator; but is subjected by Him to the supreme law of immutable Right. Social laws may hedge round our possessions from human violation; but they are powerless to guard, when God wills to humble us by the resumption of his Gifts. • Lightning, fire, frost, storm, blight, mildew, public calamities, political disturbances, and innumerable influences whereby God moulds the destiny of nations and of individuals, heed not the enactment of human legislators. We are as vulnerable in our Property as in our persons. The very means we use to increase it may insure its destruction. The human agents, by whom we would build it up, may waste and prostrate it.

Make not wealth then your dependence. • Associate it habitually in your thoughts with God the Giver. Seek it from Him; and consecrate it to Him. • Where Property is gained and enjoyed in a self-relying spirit, without a thought of the Heavenly Giver, its loss be-

comes an overwhelming blow. The mind, unused to lean on a Higher Power, has no support left, when material resources are gone, and has often been known to sink into despair, and in half-insanity to cast away life itself as worthless.

(3.) We depend on God for *Intellect*. In the present age peculiar honour is rendered to mental power; and perhaps no possession inspires more self-elation and self-dependence. Mind is indeed a noble gift; but still it is a Gift. We receive it from the Father of Spirits. And we hold it by an awfully uncertain tenure. Let the consciousness of this strengthen our humble conviction of entire dependence. That we have, in some degree, power over our own minds, we all feel. That industry, research, study, enrich the intellect, and that thoughts stored up in memory become to an extent our property, we all know. Accordingly, biography is full of prodigies of learning, of men whose minds were treasuries of various knowledge. These intellectual giants too often have felt as if by their own efforts they had raised themselves above the common herd.

But there is one consideration particularly suited to abate this self-reliance of genius. It is this. However abundantly knowledge may have been accumulated, by observation, study, or reflection, the vividness with which these remembered thoughts shall recur to the mind, and in which their chief worth consists, is not within our power. A man of talent may bring back indeed his former views; but he cannot at pleasure recall them with that energy which insures their efficient influence over other minds. He strives to speak or to write with vigour, but gives forth tame utterance only. His mind no longer is borne onward as by pinions, but, like a machine, must be impelled by foreign force. His words come no more from the soul. After his best preparation he is spiritless. His animation is not spon-

taneous, joyful, and free ; but he tugs at his load, like a weary hack, chafed by the lash into momentary speed. Hence it is that Genius so often disappoints itself and its admirers. Self-dependent, self-centred, self-confident, when it would do most, it finds itself incapable and helpless. It ought to learn humility from the fact that its happiest efforts come from an unexpected and inexplicable fervour, which it can neither command nor detain.

It is nowise my meaning, of course, to depreciate study or intellectual toil. But study and toil as we may, we cannot infuse into the mind, *at will*, that living energy which is its inspiration. Mere knowledge seems to be, in some degree, permanent and under our control ; but that inward fire and force of intellect, on which the usefulness of knowledge depends, is of all possessions most insecure. Wealth is as available at one hour of the day as another, and it may be so invested as to be insured from ordinary changes. But the Life of Intellect—how mutable it is ! There are hours of every day when it droops. Sometimes weeks may pass, and no bright thoughts will visit us. Sadly we feel that the lustre of our intellectual day is dimmed. The light that irradiates the mind does not shine with the steadiness of the sun. The eclipses of that orb we can foretell. Its rising and setting we anticipate. But the sun of the soul rises and sets we know not how. Its radiance fades when we most look and long for its brilliant beams. That sun of the intellect—what is it ? May it not be God, in a more direct sense than we imagine ? That glowing splendour, that fervid heat, which sometimes burst upon the soul, and give it a new rapidity and reach of thought, new warmth and loftiness of feeling—whence come they ? Are they not radiations from the Parent Mind ? Are they not his immediate Gift ?

Books without number have been written on the human mind, and many of the laws, according to which

its thoughts are associated, have been traced. But the higher workings of the mind—its diviner intuitions, its spiritual conceptions, its apparently self-originated ideas—have never been explained. They come and go, we know not whence or whither. We may give some account of the manner in which a particular train of thought was first suggested to a man of Genius. But the life which he breathes through his ideal representation, the hues which he throws round it, the splendour in which he arrays it, the tone of tenderness or sublimity in which he embodies it, the more than lightning speed by which he blends it with remote conceptions, the harmony in which he places it with universal truth, the vital force by which he sends it far and deep to quicken the souls of hearers or readers, and awakes in them new worlds of thought and feeling:—these are inexplicable mysteries. Philosophy cannot reveal their origin or modes of action. They can only be felt by experience. The man of genius himself, in putting forth these powers, is most conscious that he cannot command them. They come not at his bidding; they stay not at his pleasure. If a devout man, he thanks God for those influxes of mental illumination, as peculiar communications of his intellectual energy, and prays that he may be more and more open for the reception of these Heavenly Gifts.

(4.) Next I propose to show that we depend on the Divine Being for *Moral* and *Religious Power*, and that the very Spiritual Energy, whereby we grow in personal goodness, is God's Gift. This view of our dependence is incomparably the most important for us constantly to cherish. And yet this conception of the intimate relationship between our own Will and the Will of our Heavenly Father is encompassed with peculiar difficulties. Let me invite then that serious attention, without which so profound a truth can never be apprehended aright.

There are those who, when they hear it asserted that they depend on God for moral and religious life, for rectitude and holiness, are inclined to say: 'What! have we no Power of our own to know the Right, to feel the Good, to practise Virtue? If not, whence springs our consciousness of obligation? Without Power, there can be no responsibility. Deny us this, and we cease to be subjects of a Moral Government. We ourselves, and not another for us, must determine our own conduct and character, or no praise or blame can attach to us for the discharge or neglect of duty.' This objection is founded in truth, and deserves careful consideration. Every man's heart tells him that, until he have power over his own character, power to determine his own conduct, he is not answerable for his feelings or actions, and cannot justly be rewarded or condemned, let him think or do what he may. God may give me other good, such as health, without any effort of my own. I may receive it at birth. I may retain it without care. But Goodness cannot be thus given. Even Omnipotence cannot *make* me a proper object of esteem without my own activity. No act is virtuous, but such as springs from a man's own choice and will. He cannot be good, in the moral import of that term, any further than he determines himself towards goodness. And every man who consults the inward monitor, and inquires why and when he blames or commends himself, will find that these judgments are founded on the consciousness of his having this Spiritual Power. It does depend on the individual, therefore, whether he will be good or bad.

How then, it may be asked, is man dependent on God for virtue? Why is he to seek it from God, if the power of securing it is lodged in his own breast? The difficulty is one which has often been felt. The apparent incompatibility of man's Moral Dependence with the Moral Freedom necessary to constitute him an

accountable agent has led different sects to give up one or the other of these seemingly contradictory elements. Not a few Christians, in their anxiety to assert human dependence, and to declare piety and virtue to be gifts of God's grace, do in effect deny personal power. They teach that men are utterly weak, and speak of religion as a life infused by the irresistible agency of the Holy Spirit. The just inference from this would be, that religion has no more *moral* worth than a fair face or a large estate, or any other providential favour. And when, instead of drawing such an inference, the teachers of this doctrine proceed to threaten with the fires of everlasting torment unfortunate beings who are not visited by Almighty grace, they utter a doctrine against which reason and conscience protest as outraging alike the equity and mercy of God. There are other Christians, who, to save human accountableness, and to give man a right feeling of Power, have banished from sight his Dependence, or at least have not urged it in the strong language used in the Scriptures, and by saints in all ages, so as to make it the foundation of solemn duties. In this way, immense spiritual injury has been done. For, as I apprehend the laws of life, without a deep sense of our dependence upon the All-Good for virtue and piety, no great improvement in either can be made.

Thus have I stated the two classes of errors into which men have fallen, through the difficulty of reconciling Human Power with Dependence on God. How then may these two great truths be held harmoniously? How may we combine the feeling of accountableness with the conviction that we have no Goodness, and can have none, but as a Divine Gift?

There are two views which seem to me fitted to impress our constant dependence on God for spiritual growth, without taking from us our feeling of moral power.

(i.) The first is this. Our power over our character and conduct is the result of our Nature, of the *Constitution* of our minds. We are capable of virtue, because we are gifted with Reason, with Conscience, and with what may be called the Self-determining Principle, through which we may adopt conscience and reason as our rule. Take away these faculties, and we can do neither right nor wrong, and for want of these the inferior animals apparently are not and cannot be proper objects of praise or blame. These high faculties are the very root of our moral agency and responsibility. Now whence came these faculties, and how are they sustained? Whence originated our nature, with its ineffably grand endowments? These are God's Gifts. We owe to Him our Spirits—this light of Reason, these monitions of Conscience, this Power of making Conscience and Reason our guide. And we not only received these faculties at first, but they are constantly upheld by Him who originally gave them. Without God's indwelling energy, these inward spiritual forces would expire. As the light of the sun in the morning returns to us through God's power,—so through the Divine Agency the light of the mind rises anew when we awake; and, without Him, we could no more bring back thought and moral feeling than we could restore the dawn and the splendour of day. It is true that our present good dispositions and purposes, if such we have, are the results of past good acts, and in so far we owe them to ourselves. But the power through which those acts were done was an organic element of our nature, which God conferred. Still more we owe to God that wonderful principle of mind called 'Habit,' through which our present character is vitally interwoven with the past, through which good deeds propagate and perpetuate themselves, and every virtuous effort makes the next more spontaneous and successful. That I am the purer now for former self-denial, the freer for past

obedience, 'is the result of that constitution of mind which God originally gave, which God continually sustains. On God, therefore, I depend for my growth and progress.

Let me add, further, that our nature, with all its high moral powers, would be wholly ineffectual to develop piety and virtue, were we not placed in a social sphere, a moral community, in which these powers may find scope and incitements to action. Place a man alone, with no influences around to speak to him of God, with no fellow-beings to be the objects of affection, of justice and charity, with no instruction to enlighten, no example to guide and inspire, and his power would lie dormant and inert. He would have no duties to perform, and not even the idea of Duty would quicken him. Our moral and religious acquirements, so far as we have any, are the results, not simply of our nature, but also of our social condition—of our relations with Humanity, or our opportunities of being acted upon by and of acting and reacting with our race. And Who placed us where we are; knit us thus to others by so many ties of love; made us living members of the Spiritual Universe, and opened our ears and hearts to the instruction and incitements which the laws of Divine Order for ever utter? We owe to God these outward means, motives, and opportunities, as truly as we do the innate capacities of virtue and of holiness. Without Him, then, we could do nothing. We owe to Him, as the Author of our nature and social state, our whole moral and religious development. Without his enlivening agency, the Monitor within would never again speak, the intuitive perception of Duty would fade away, the power of adhering to the Right would perish. When we wake, with a new day, how intensely should we feel, then, that it is through God's *sustaining energy*, that the Voice of the Soul, which whispers to us with aspiration, courage, cheerful hope, again is

audible, that it is the Almighty Renewer who grants us power to make the future an improvement on the past.

This sentiment of our constant Dependence cannot be too deep. And it is plain that it in no way interferes with our exercise of Moral Power, or impairs our Moral Freedom. On the contrary, it presupposes that we have power, and only teaches that this power is a Gift. But because a gift, is it less *real*; less our *own*, or are we less *responsible* for its use? Is it not, indeed, the one unalterable sign and sanction of responsibility, that our power is entrusted by a Higher Being, who, as the All-Good, has the *right* to demand an account of the way in which this entrusted Power is employed? Thus we learn, that as God created and sustains our Spiritual Nature and the Spiritual Universe, with which we are vitally related, we are bound to ascribe our moral and religious growth to his Gift, at the very time when we regard it, in an important sense, as our own work. Such is my first illustration.

(ii.) But this does not exhaust the subject. It is plain that Scripture reveals a profounder doctrine of Dependence than this. It not only teaches that God gives sustenance to the Nature which He for ever re-creates, but it affirms that He imparts *influence* additional to this indwelling energy in our nature. It declares that Our Father gives his *Spirit* to them that ask. And by this we are to understand not merely that He endows us with rational and moral faculties, and the natural means of improving them, for these we enjoy whether we ask or not. But the meaning is, that He imparts an influx of Light and Strength in answer to Prayer, and that, without this *Spiritual Aid*, we cannot grow to Perfection. According to this doctrine, our dependence for moral and religious excellence is constant and complete. But I maintain that such dependence in no way encroaches on human power,

and that it still leaves the formation of our character to our own choice and will.

Am I asked how I reconcile man's Moral Power with Spiritual Influence? The answer is not difficult. Man needs and depends on the Divine Energy for his development. But this energy he can gain, if he will *seek* for it. God liberally places it within his reach. Without it he cannot fulfil his destiny; but he is endowed with power to aspire after it, and the Father welcomes him to its amplest use. I do not deny man's ability to acquire goodness, by saying that he must receive it from the All-Good. If by seeking he may obtain this energy, it really becomes his own; and all the virtue it bestows is as truly under his control as if he attained it by unassisted will. Power does not consist in our being able to accomplish ends by isolated action, without using the influence of others. Man is strong, not by exercising unaided energy; but he grows in strength, in proportion as he can gather and turn to use the energies of other beings. We see an illustration of this in all common affairs. The mightiest operations of man are performed, not by his single arm, but by availing himself of the forces of nature, of wind, fire, steam, and mechanical powers. His strength multiplies itself by applying, and thus making his own, the strength of countless other agents.

The same truth is illustrated, in a higher form, in the realm of duty and religion. When I resolve on seeking spiritual improvement, do I accomplish my end by lonely efforts of my own will, however often renewed? Certainly not! I avail myself of incentives, guidance, encouragement, aid, from fellow-beings. I read what scribes and sages have written, and strive to infuse their thoughts and spirit into my own soul. I recall the examples of the devout and disinterested, the heroic and humane. I associate with the excellent and wise, who live around me. I add to private intercourse

and friendship the public means of religious and moral culture, worship with the congregation, communion at Christ's table, concert in deeds of charity. In a word, I strive to grow in goodness, by absorbing and assimilating, and so making my own, the goodness and wisdom of my race. What immense help do such influences afford me! How continually, when my mind is dull and languid, do the thoughts, tones, looks of fellow-men, kindle a new flame within. How repeatedly, when my purpose faints and flags, does a cheering word, or bright example, revive my sinking energy! Facts of this kind are of such constant occurrence, that no one can dispute them. And they clearly reveal the nature of the power which man exerts in moulding his own character. It is the power of exalting and perfecting it, by using the inspiring aid of fellow-beings. Now Christianity teaches that in addition to all such influences, received from the life of Humanity, we need an Influence from the Father of Spirits,—which is infinitely more efficient, and without which these other aids will fail of their highest effect. It teaches also that this Divine influence is more within our reach than the assistance derived from any or all human beings. For it is promised in full measure, in proportion as it is earnestly asked for, to all who seek. And prayer may be offered always, everywhere, and under all conditions.

That we thus depend on the Divine Spirit, that we do thus need Heavenly influence in the work of attaining to the Perfect Life, none who enter on this upward course can long doubt. You, who never attempted to reach this sublime end, may question or deny. To you it may seem no great task to become what you call good; for your standard of goodness is low. You never lifted your eyes to the heavenly height, to which Conscience and Christianity summon you. And in the next place, you never seriously undertook to master your

passions. You are unable, as yet, to measure their might. You know not how formidable appetite, ambition, avarice are, for you have been all your life in league with these foes of your virtue. Never will you learn what sway they have usurped over you, and the strength of the chains they have bound around you, until you strive to shake them off. Then will these tyrants start up in giant form, and laugh to scorn your faint resistance, and appeal your feeble will.

The good man, the true saint, the real Christian—he who seems most spiritually self-subsistent,—will be the last to question and deny his need of Almighty aid. He feels his dependence ever more deeply. When heavenly aspirations enter the soul, they are like a light suddenly kindled in the dark. They reveal undreamed-of defects. They waken a new sense of sin. They display the deformity of motives, from which we had before acted without misgiving. The good man daily acquires a delicacy of moral perception and feeling, before whose penetrating gaze his inmost imperfections are laid bare. His outward blemishes, his grosser faults, may be amended. But the sins which cling closest, which wind themselves subtly through the fibres of his nature,—his pride, vanity, self-conceit, self-indulgence, and, above all, the disloyalty of his self-will to the Will of the All-Good,—these grow only more apparent. He finds that to purify the fountain-head of emotion in the soul, to cleanse its depths from all that defiles it, to drive out lurking ill from its recesses, and to untwine the serpent coils of selfishness from his purposes and plans, his aims and interests, is a vastly harder work than building fair walls of outer decorum. Some powerful excitement, some unwonted trial, will rouse into action lawless impulses, over whose subjection he had sung songs of triumph. Long dormant evils, awakened by adverse temptations, by a rush of prosperity, or a shock of adversity, by flattery and favour,

or by persecution and peril, will burst forth from their hiding-places, with such violence as almost to make him doubt the reality of his religious life. At such trying seasons, a secret ejaculation, a cry of the soul for God's grace to rescue, brings home to the good man his instant dependence. With what grateful joy does he then hold fast to the assurance, that he is never alone, for the Father is with him, that the Living Source of all good is near to him as his own life, and ready to renew him with light and strength from heaven.

I close this discourse with observing, that our dependence upon God, the Giver, will be felt by us just in proportion as we comprehend the spirituality of religion,—as we rise above professions and dogmas, rites and creeds, and learn that holiness and goodness consist in Love, in pure and disinterested affections and acts towards our Heavenly Father and our fellow-beings. And he who desires not only to outwardly worship, but to intimately commune with his Creator and Sustainer, he, who would gain an ever quicker sensibility to the presence of his constant Benefactor, soon learns—that, owing to the infirmity of human powers, the illusions of the visible world, and the invisibleness of the Infinite One, it is most difficult to gain and keep the height of spiritual vision. Still, if his heart has been truly touched by a Divine Influence, he continually strives to reach this interior and enlarging knowledge of Him, 'in whom we live and move and have our being.' Evermore he aspires to gain—as good men have in all ages,—that unreserved, spontaneous, cheerful consecration of his highest powers, which he feels to be due to the best of Beings. Earnestly he longs for that veneration, affectionate devotedness, and serene trust, which may elevate every act into adoring service of the All-Holy, for a gratitude, beyond words to utter, that surrenders all to Him who first bestowed,—for an escape out of every selfish care, anxiety, fear, and

sorrow, into entire, confiding, filial Love. This near access to the Father, this living fellowship with the Father, becomes to him the one end of existence. But this good, above all other goods, makes him feel only more intensely his constant dependence on the Divine Spirit. For this happiness of Heaven can come only from Heaven. To the exhaustless fountain of celestial bliss he looks then with unfailing faith. And when, in the course of his pilgrimage, this blessedness is granted; when calmness, which earthly discord cannot disturb, diffuses itself through his soul; when the clouds which hang over futurity vanish, and the heavenly home opens before him with ineffable splendour; when the Father's Presence is felt like that of a visible Friend, and the parental love of the All-Perfect penetrates his inmost being, suffusing his eyes with tears of thankfulness, and lifting them upwards with immortal hope,—in such high moments, whence does he consciously derive his unutterable joy? By experience he then knows, as well as feels, that this Peace past all understanding is the influx of the Peace of God. With mingled gratitude and awe, he recognizes then, that above, upon, within his own spirit is moving the Divine Spirit, bringing the Light of an Eternal Day. Thenceforth the truth, written in his heart by the finger of God Himself, becomes a glorious reality, that to all who ask for his Holy Spirit, the Father GIVES.

THE PERFECTING POWER OF RELIGION.

'Be ye therefore Perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is Perfect.'—MATTHEW v. 48.

BY what influence is Religion our Supreme Good? Much mystery would be removed from the Religious Life, and men would seek it more wisely and efficiently, if they understood with more precision the true blessedness which it confers. On this point my views may be expressed in a few words. My belief is that the Supreme Good of an intelligent and moral being is the Perfection of its Nature. Nothing gives what is worthy of being considered Happiness, and nothing is of enduring benefit, unless it exalts us to that excellence for which God designs us. Religion is the spring of peace and joy as the Inspirer of Universal Virtue,—as pre-eminently a *quicken*ing principle, giving life and energy to the Intellect and the Heart, fortifying Conscience, and animating it with an unconquerable purpose of duty, awakening Love in its purest and most disinterested forms, raising Thought to its highest objects, and thus training our whole being to that fulness, harmony, and beauty, the union of which constitutes Perfection.

Religion gives happiness by its inward influence. Too many ascribe to it a different operation. They regard it as a worship of God, in order to win his favour. They imagine that it serves and saves us by conciliating our Maker, by its effect upon another, not

upon ourselves ; by its procuring good from abroad, not by its unfolding and elevating our own souls. Few, indeed, understand how essential is the growth of their own highest affections and energies,—that without this nothing can do them good, and that to promote this is the great function of religion.

This truth is worthy of development. Let me restate it so that it may be fully understood. I affirm, then, that the great office of religion is to call forth, elevate, and purify the Spirit of Man, and thus to conform it to its Divine Original. I know no other way in which Religion is to promote our Happiness ; for I know no happiness but that of a good, wise, upright, firm, powerful, disinterested, elevated Character. I look to religion for blessings, because it includes and promotes Universal Excellence, brings the soul into health and concord, enlarges it, unfolds it in due proportions, and exalts it to the beauty and power for which it was created. It is the office of religion, I repeat once more, to call forth the *whole* Spirit of Man, the Intellect, the Conscience, the Affections, the Will ; to awaken energy and holy purpose ; to inspire a calm and rational, yet a profound love of truth and goodness, against which all powers of the universe will be impotent. Did I not hope for this quickening influence from religion, I could not speak of it as the Supreme Good. For our supreme good is the perfection of our being ; and nothing which does not involve and promote this deserves the name.

It is said, I know, that our Happiness comes from God, not from ourselves. And this language, justly interpreted, conveys a great truth. God is the only fountain of blessedness. But from the nature of things, and from his own perfection, He makes beings blessed through and according to the capacities with which He endows them, and in no other way. I can expect from my Creator no Happiness but one proportioned to my Nature. And what is my Nature ? I

answer that, pre-eminently I am a Moral Being. I have a sense of duty, a perception of virtue, an inward voice commanding me with Divine Authority to reverence Right in every act, to eradicate all evil from my heart and life, and to advance towards that Perfection of which I catch a glimpse, but which shines in full glory far before me. Now I affirm that the proper blessedness of such a being, that for which I was made, consists in conforming myself to this principle of rectitude. I am not more conscious that I live, than I am that the Moral Principle is given to be the governing power of my nature; and that in resisting it, or in abandoning it to the sway of the passions, I do and must forfeit the proper good of my being. No other real good is left. In resisting it, I am against myself, and turn into a foe the divinest power of my soul; carry on a perpetual war in my own breast, and incur that severest suffering in the universe, self-rebuke. These remarks will show in what sense we are to believe that God gives us Happiness. He gives it to us through ourselves, through the improvement of our whole nature, and in no other way. And the knowledge, love, and service of God, or religion, is the means of Supreme Good, because it is the great quickening principle by which our being is perfected.

We are to be made happy then—let us never forget it—by what we *are*, not by what we *have*, by the purity and power of our own minds, and not by what is given us from abroad. We are too apt with insane eagerness to gather round ourselves defences and means of enjoyment, whilst the mind is left uneducated, and the character untrained. We are too apt to use religion itself as a kind of outward charm, and expect that it will make us happy by some mysterious agency, instead of looking to it as the central, Life-giving Principle, and as the great refiner and purifier of the Soul.

(1.) Am I asked how Religion is the impelling

power towards Perfection, and how, in strengthening it, we fortify every noble principle? I will give a few answers drawn, in the first instance, from our Moral Nature.

(i.) Religion gives infinite worth to Conscience. Religion does not create conscience, For whether I am a religious man or not, I shall, as a man, still have some sense of duty, and of the distinctions between good and evil. But this moral principle lacks life, when not quickened and sustained by confidence in a righteous God. Conscience is not equal of itself to the work of withstanding temptation, and raising us to our true dignity. The passions are too strong. Do not all feel this to be true? Persuade a man that no Higher Authority in the Universe, than his own conscience, enjoins on him self-constraint, cut him off from any Higher Lawgiver and Judge than his own reason, and probably he will become enslaved to some lower principle. The conscience was never intended to govern alone. It was made to derive dominion from a conscious union with a Supreme Being. And this Supreme Being is revealed to us by religion. Religion is faith in an Infinite Creator, who delights in and enjoins that rectitude which conscience commands us to seek. This conviction gives a Divine sanction to duty. From religion I learn that my idea of Right is not an individual, private, personal conviction, but that it is derived from the Universal Parent; that it is his Inspiration; that it is not a lonely voice in my own soul, but the word of the Infinite Will. Now I see that goodness is not merely a law of my own mind, but the Supreme Law of the Universe, that all intelligent beings are subject to it, that all creation conspires to fulfil it. Without this faith in a Holy God, duty would be but a whisper in my breast. With Him it comes in a voice louder than all thunders. Without a consciousness of God, I might hope to win happiness

in spite of the violation of the law of rectitude. Now I know that it would be more rational to seek happiness on the rack or in the furnace, than in wrong-doing. All Nature now becomes to me the preacher of righteousness; for the heavens and the earth, the sunshine and storms, in their very Order, reveal an Almighty Power, who is pledged to the support of virtue and to the suppression of sin. Without a God, there would be no other inspector of my motives, thoughts, desires, and purposes, than my own soul; and I might succeed in disguising from myself, and hiding from others, inward impurity and deformity. But now a Light more piercing than a thousand suns, and veiled by no cloud nor night, shines full upon me; and I feel that my most secret purposes lie bare before Infinite purity. Who does not recognize the authority added to conscience, the sanction given to duty, by this confidence in an Almighty Lawgiver, and an ever-present Judge, whose law and supreme delight are the Moral Perfection of his children.

(ii.) In another view, Religion is the great spring of Moral improvement. This confidence in God alone gives the hope of reaching Perfection. Hope inspires energy. But without trust in God I have no sufficient hope to excite and sustain persevering efforts after excellence. True, there are other aids of virtue besides religion,—the approbation and rebukes of conscience, the esteem and honour of fellow-beings, the present recompenses of uprightness and charity. But that watchful discipline over the inmost thoughts and motives, that aspiration after disinterestedness and inward purity, that scorn of suffering in the way of well-doing, that preference of the soul's health and progress to outward interests, that conflict with absorbing self-love,—all of which are so essential to eminence and permanence of rectitude,—come not from ourselves. They demand continual, fresh supplies of Divine in-

spiration. So tremendous is the power of passion, so subtle is temptation, so contagious is the influence of example, that a man, conscious of no Higher power than his own, and expecting no improvement but such as he can compass by his unaided will, might well despair of resisting the combined powers of evil. An Infinite Motive is needed to quicken us in this never-ending war with selfishness and the world. And where is such a motive to be found, if we believe in no Everlasting Friend of goodness, and in no Future Life where our present spiritual growth will be crowned with Perfection ?

Take away the prophetic hopes of religion, and my nature is full of discouraging contradictions. I see and approve the good, and resolve on amendment and progress. I have conceptions of excellence, which I burn to make real in character and deed. But the weight of mortality depresses the spirit to the dust ; resistless currents are hurrying down my nature to indulgence ; there is a tendency to excess in every passion and impulse ; and sensuality and sloth perpetually thwart the upward efforts of the moral nature. Is there in the universe no power of good to overcome evil higher than I am conscious of in my own breast ? How then can I ever realize that ideal of excellence which shines before me ? Then can I attain at best but to a low virtue. When I consider too—as without religious faith I must—that even this low virtue will soon pass from me, that I have no power to preserve it beyond the grave, that every high aspiration, benevolent sympathy, and upright energy is to perish with the body, what motive remains sufficient to quicken me in becoming better ? Hope is the gift of religion. Religion teaches not only that there is an Infinite Lawgiver, but an Infinite Inspirer of virtue. It teaches us that God delights to perfect his intelligent offspring ; that He has made for us the very end of imparting to us his own

spirit; and that there are no bounds to this communication of his life. It teaches us that we are subjected to temptations, both within and without, as a trial to awaken effort, to remind us of our need of aid, and to prepare us for a higher mode of spiritual being. It teaches us that the Ever-Living has infinite love for each human soul, and that present virtue is but the germ of an ever-growing goodness. According to religion no effort can be lost. What we gain here we shall carry with us thereafter. Death will bear *birth* into a new life. Sprung from an Eternal Parent, surely as God lives we are to live for ever. Our connexion with the Eternal One gives us a hold on all future ages. In Him there is a power to uphold and carry us forward through a boundless universe, and without end. Believing in the All-good, I feel that the perfection of my own spirit is no dream; that it may become a reality; that the spirit may actually be pure, powerful, bright and blessed as an angel's; that if faithful to laws of the religious life, I shall conquer not only death, but what is so much more terrible than death, the power of moral evil! Believing in a heavenly Father, I can set no bound to my hope of what man is to become under the purifying influence of Jesus Christ and his religion. I anticipate that here on earth, perhaps at no distant day, when Christianity shall be purified from its corruptions, human character will rise to greater dignity and beauty, than we can now conceive. And when I look forward to the future world, to a succession of ages without end, I am overwhelmed with a sense of impotence to conjecture to what heights of power, love, happiness, a human being, loyal to God and to duty, is destined to attain. The most glowing language, in which genius and piety have sought to shadow forth the felicities of man's future being, seems but tame and inexpressive. Man, improving for ever under the influences of the infinite and immortal God, is assured of a destiny as incomprehensible now as is God's own being.

(iii.) I can offer but one other consideration to show that religion is the great spring of elevation in character. It offers to us, for our veneration and love, and perpetual intercourse, a being whose character comprehends all venerable and lovely attributes; who reveals to us within Himself, without spot or limit, that very perfection of goodness, after which our moral nature impels us to aspire. We all know the aid which the mind acquires from communion with a human being of noble qualities; how in admiring him it exalts itself; how his presence, voice, countenance, influence, lift it above its ordinary tone. To contemplate and love excellence is to be inspired by it. Attachment to an excellent being is itself excellent and conforms us to his image. Now religion places us in the presence of infinite purity. It raises the mind in meditation, gratitude, and sympathy, and filial awe to the Father of the universe. It recognizes everywhere in creation the traces and radiant signatures of the Greatest and Best Mind. It teaches us to feel that a higher than man's agency, a grander than man's presence, for ever surrounds us. I know nothing but this conscious relationship with an existence more exalted than our own that can truly elevate us. We suffer, and often deeply, by our intercourse with fellow-beings. Perpetually we are tempted to fall under the influence of lower feelings, till we become insensible to the reality and worth of our highest spiritual nature. But feeling the presence and the perfection of our spiritual Father, the consciousness of our own spiritual being brightens within us. Sentiments of love and veneration towards this invisible source of all spiritual good subdue the depressing influences of our material organization. Religion, where it becomes a principle of life, works a greater transformation in our existence, than would be wrought were a new eye given to us, by which we should behold ourselves surrounded with a higher race of spiritual beings, and thus should be en-

abled to enter into intimate intercourse with them. In truth all other friendships are powerless to exalt the character or to give happiness, compared with this divine friendship which is the very essence of the religious life.

(2.) The doctrine that religion can do us good, only by refining and perfecting our whole being, is of such great moment, that I proceed to illustrate it further; for I am satisfied that one cause of the limited sway of religion is the narrow conception formed of its function. That religion is a Universal Principle,—spreading its influence through the whole being, developing every power to a fulness which it could not otherwise attain, diffusing inspiration through the intellect, as well as the conscience and the will, taking under its purifying rule the appetites and passions as well as the affections, imparting fresh interest to common existence, exalting and expanding practical energy, refining and adorning social manners, adding cheerfulness as well as purity to friendly intercourse. and blessing us only by this universally enlivening agency,—this is a truth not yet understood as it should be. Hence to many, religion, instead of being thought of as comprehending whatever is good, wise, energetic, beautiful, great, and happy in human nature, is a word of doubtful import,—especially suggesting notions of restraint, repression, narrowness of thought, exclusive feeling and habitual gloom.

I could not commend the religious life, did I not view it in the broad light in which I am now attempting to place it. For nothing can make us truly happy but our perfection. And the very idea of perfection is, that the *whole* nature of a being is unfolded in due proportion, so that the highest and worthiest powers will hold ascendancy, and all others, by acting in their true spheres, will fulfil the end for which they were given. Such universal development constitutes, as we all know, the health and beauty of the body. A man in whom a few organs only would grow, would be a monster.

Even if this excess should occur in his noblest organs, as the head or the eye, we should still regard him as deformed. The body is a healthful and beautiful organization only when the principle of life acts generously through all its parts expanding all in a just degree, so that each contributes to the vigour and symmetry of the whole. Such an organization we call a perfect body. And so perfection of mind consists in well-proportioned activity and life, through *all* its faculties, affections, desires, powers, whereby they all grow up into one harmonious whole.

The prevalent error always has been, that men have confined their conceptions of religion too much to its *direct* agencies. They have supposed it to consist chiefly in immediate thoughts of God, in immediate addresses to Him, and in fervours of emotion called forth by immediate contemplation of his glory. Now religion so viewed cannot insure our highest happiness. I know, indeed, that these spiritual acts are often the most delightful of which our nature is capable. The pious man, when able to concentrate every energy of mind and heart upon the infinite goodness of his Creator, and to enter by faith and hope into communion with the unseen and everlasting world, has a foretaste of joy unspeakable and full of glory. But I need not tell you that this elevation of thought and feeling is not designed to be the ordinary state of even the most improved human beings. We were plainly not designed for this constant intense action of our spirits towards our Creator. No effort on our part can long sustain it. And were it sustained for a protracted period, it would end in the exhaustion and derangement of our faculties. Besides, there are not a few who seem constitutionally incapacitated for such ardour of religious emotion. If religion insured our happiness, then, only as giving us an immediate enjoyment of God, it would really contribute but little to our well-being,—the greater part of

life being necessarily devoted to other duties and engagements, to intercourse with fellow-beings, to toils and relaxations, and to putting forth creative energy on the material world. We cannot live absorbed in the work of adoration. We cannot keep our minds perpetually bent upon one object. And the brighter that object the sooner are we dazzled and exhausted.

I am conscious that I was made for an endless variety of thoughts, interests, sympathies, and occupations. I have curiosity impelling me to seek the new and explore the mysterious; the reasoning faculty prompting me to infer the unknown from the known, and to rise from particulars to general truths; imagination for ever surpassing the bounds of the real and the present; the love of beauty enjoying all harmonies; social affections, putting on a thousand forms according to the relations and characters of those around me; the senses, through which countless images and symbols of the material world rush in and throng my mind; and finally animal appetites compelling me to put forth energy upon material objects. Now all these principles and tendencies of my nature are various capacities of enjoyment, and all demand their proper forms of good. Nothing can make me truly happy but a universal principle, that watches over, protects, calls forth, and gratifies in their due order all these various elements of my being. Such I hold to be the influence of religion; and it is through this function that it becomes our supreme good.

I insist the more on this, because religion has suffered from nothing so much as the notion of its being an exclusive principle. Men in all ages have thought that they must sacrifice to religion some elements of their nature. To cherish the religious principle, some have warring against their social affections, and have led solitary lives; some against their senses, and have abjured all pleasure in asceticism; some against reason,

and have superstitiously feared to think ; some against imagination, and have foolishly dreaded to read poetry or books of fiction ; some against the political and patriotic principle, and have shrunk from public affairs : all apprehending that if they were to give free range to their natural emotions, their religious life would be chilled or extinguished. Thus the notion of hostility between religion and human nature has in some form or other insinuated itself into believers of most different systems of faith. Now, in opposition to all such views, I would maintain that the true office of religion is to bring out the *whole nature* of man in harmonious activity, and that, by thus developing it after a divine order, to show how divine a work human nature is, and for what divine happiness it is destined.

To understand better this office and agency of religion, let us observe that our nature is composed of superior and inferior powers. All these religion takes under its care, the lowest as well as the highest. But it promotes our happiness in an especial manner by enlivening and perfecting the highest first. And to this influence of religion the necessary limits of this discourse compel me to confine attention. These higher powers of human nature are commonly ranged under two classes, the moral and the rational—the first called conscience, or the power of rectitude ; the last called intellect, or the power of knowing truth. These being our highest powers, nothing can be plainer, as was argued under the former head of this discourse, than that our happiness depends upon their free and full development. The just view of religion, which I am anxious to present, is that it is the great principle by which these distinguishing powers of humanity are quickened and enlarged, and that in this way it chiefly promotes our happiness. Under the former head, I have shown how religion perfects our moral faculties by unfolding the conscience. I pass now to the second

class of our higher faculties, the rational, and would briefly show that it is the office of religion to perfect the intellect.

It is a painful reflection that as yet the intellect is a source of but little happiness to the majority of mankind. In the vast multitudes, among all nations, it is doomed to inaction and lethargy. In the labouring classes of every land it is famished by want of education, oppressed by drudging toil and urgent necessities of the animal nature, and darkened by countless prejudices and superstitions. And in all classes, however cultivated, intellect is too much the slave of the senses and of selfish passions, and is yet to be awakened to a consciousness of its real glory. To religion I look as the power by which this divine faculty is to be revealed and exalted to its true felicity. Am I asked how religion acts so beneficially upon the intellect, I answer in various ways, a few only can now be selected for illustration.

(i.) Religion then is the great inspirer of the intellect, in the first place, by exhibiting its essential grandeur, and by teaching it to reverence itself. It is religion only that teaches us this reverence for the intellect. For it alone reveals to us the connexion of the intellect with God, its derivation from his wisdom, its nearness to his reason, its capacity of everlasting reception of his light of truth. Separated from God, I can regard my intellect only as a power, which is to endure but a brief span, and which can advance but little beyond its present bounds. And when so viewed, I am oppressed by the consciousness of the impotence and insufficiency of human intelligence. There is not a single object of my thought in regard to which the unknown does not infinitely exceed what I am able to know. The moment I would penetrate beneath the surface, whether of material things or of spiritual beings, whether of the lifeless stone or of the thinking soul, I

find a depth utterly unfathomable by my reason in this present stage of existence. And even within the narrow sphere of actual knowledge, errors constantly admonish me of my mental weakness. So that every act of my mind leads to most humbling and discouraging estimates of itself. I do not wonder that men of superior intelligence, but wanting in religious faith, have been led by a review of the extravagances and baffled efforts of the philosophic class, to treat with contempt all claims of human reason of attaining to truth. It is only as we apprehend our relationship to an All-wise God, that we can understand ourselves, and become to ourselves objects of awe and solemn interest. The human mind, regarded as the offspring of the Infinite Mind, consciously partakes of the grandeur of its source. Let me know that an infinite intelligence pervades the universe, and I feel that intelligence without bounds may be possible also for myself. Let me further know that this infinite intelligence is the parent of my mind, has an interest in it, watches over it and created it that it should unfold for ever, and partake more and more of his own truth, and how can I but regard my intellect, with veneration? Then I look abroad upon this vast creation, which before had discouraged me, with joy and hope; for I see in its very vastness only a wider field for intellectual culture. I cease to be depressed by learning slowly, if I am to learn for ever. Nor am I any longer cast down by difficulties in gaining truth; for the energy and hardihood of thought, acquired by struggling with obstacles and by a laborious training, are the best preparation for an endless progress. Religion thus reveals the grandeur, and still more the sacredness, of human intellect. For it shows that reason is not figuratively but really a divine energy working in us. No other motive can have equal efficacy in teaching us to watch over and expand this heavenly gift. The power of this motive is but little known, because

man's living relationship with God through the *vital influence* of religion, has as yet been but faintly comprehended; and what has been called religion has too often tended to depress rather than to invigorate human reason.

(ii.) In another way religion gives life to the intellect, and converts its action into a means of joy. It communicates new interest to all objects of thought. Religion begins by revealing to us the most interesting Being in the Universe, whose character is inexhaustible alike in its essential perfection and in its endless manifestations; and whose nearness to us, and constant influence upon us, arrest the mind with intense admiration, such as all other beings cannot inspire. Nor is this all. Religion reveals creation to us as *vitally* connected with this Being of beings, the work of his incessant power, the object of his constant care, comprehended within his boundless goodness, and moved and guided by his influent energy. Thus it throws a new light over all existences, and invests them with a portion of the interest with which God Himself is regarded. Yes! all things within and around us, the earth, sea, and heavens, our fellow-creatures and the material world, human nature and human history, all rise into a brighter glory, disclose profounder meanings, and attract the mind with a new charm, when once they are associated in our thoughts with the Infinite Mind. The universe becomes an open book of Divine Wisdom. Nothing appears too small to become worthy of study, when we recognize that God has imprinted on it his thought, and left within it some symbol of his own perfection. All true science is essentially religious. It springs from the intuition of permanent and universal law in nature. And its end is to trace out connexions, dependencies, and harmonious laws throughout creation. It looks upon nature as one vast system, as a complex whole, all parts of which are bound together and are co-

working for the common good. Now these harmonies, connexions, general laws, and common purposes are all the emanation and expression of a supreme and disposing Mind. They are divine intelligence made visible. It is then the intelligence pervading nature that science studies. Thus in all its discoveries it is virtually tracing out the method of divine reason, and, however unintentionally, it contributes to the glory of God's revealed truth. The tendencies of science are all towards God. And consequently it can never be prosecuted so triumphantly and so joyfully, as when quickened and led by the living consciousness of communion with the Infinite Mind.

(iii.) This leads us to another view, showing us the influence of the religious principle in perfecting the intellect. It favours that primary virtue of an intelligent being, fairness of mind, the honest disposition to receive light whencesoever it may come. This uprightness of judgment, impartiality in research, and superiority to prejudice contributes more to the discovery of truth, and to real wisdom, than the most splendid genius or the most laborious acquirement. This simple sincerity is worth more than all books, teachers, colleges, and literary apparatus. No matter with what power of intellect a man may be gifted, no matter how extensive may be his means of knowledge, if he want candour, openness to conviction, readiness to see and acknowledge error, and above all reverence for truth as sacred, his intellectual endowments will be used only to fortify himself in prejudice, to defend opinions which passion has recommended to his intellect, or to invent doctrines which will best serve to build up his fame. The wildest theories, most ruinous projects, and most pernicious principles, have owed their origin to highly intellectual men. For I know no influence like that of religion to form an upright mind. This influence it exerts, not only by inspiring us with that reverence for the intellect

already spoken of, but also by awakening the conviction that the intellect is formed for continual progress toward Truth; and that, consequently, to chain it down to its present imperfect views, is to rob it of its destiny. Still more religion exerts this influence, by making us feel that we are carrying on our most private inquiries, reasonings, judgments, in the presence of that God, who is infinite light, and whose intelligence is truth. It is the secrecy with which the mind prosecutes its researches, weighs evidence, and makes objections, that tempts us to shut our eyes to the light. But a consciousness of the presence of God to the mind brings home to us our responsibility for our judgments as well as actions. The consciousness that his pure eye inspects us, compels us to inspect ourselves and to guard jealously against every influence from abroad, or from our own passions, which may pervert the reason. Thus it makes luminous the intellect. Religion opens the mind to truth; and truth is the atmosphere wherein our rational nature becomes illumined and made fit to enter the world of perfect light.

(iv.) This doctrine, that it is religion which chiefly quickens the Intellect and makes it a blessing, might be illustrated by a variety of considerations which it was my hope to place before you, but on which time is wanting to enlarge. I intended, for instance, to show that the principle of universal love, which is embraced in true religion, and is indeed its essence, disposes the mind to the most enlarged thinking, and at the same time makes knowledge active and practical, thus converting it into wisdom, by directing it to the promotion of the highest good in the service of mankind.

Again, I particularly intended to show that religion is a source of light to the intellect by opening to it the highest order of truths, and thus introducing it to a celestial happiness. On this topic it might not be easy to avoid the charge of mysticism. I believe, how-

ever, and I wished to prove, that the highest truths are not those which we learn from abroad. No outward teaching can bestow them. They are unfolded from within, by our very progress in the religious life. New ideas of perfection, new convictions of immortality, a new consciousness of God, a new perception of our spiritual nature, come to us as revelations, and open upon us with a splendour which belongs not to this world. Thus we gain the power to look with deeper penetration into human life, as well as into the universe. We read a wider significance in events. We attain to glimpses of the infinite mind and of a future world, which, though we may not be able to define them in human speech, we yet know to correspond to realities. Now this higher wisdom, whereby the intellect anticipates the bright visions which await it in another life, comes only from the growth and dominant influence of the religious principle, by which we become transformed more and more into the likeness of God. So true is it that religion makes intellect a blessing, and an infinite blessing.

In this discourse I have thus aimed to show how religion is our supreme good, by giving life and force to our highest powers, bringing them into the healthiest and most harmonious activity, and quickening us in the pursuit of perfection. Earnestly do I insist that religion blesses us by no mysterious agency in procuring the favour of an All-powerful Being who will do everything for us without our co-operation, but by unfolding that pure, firm, disinterested, lofty character, and that large, just, and wise intelligence,—which conform us to the likeness of our Divine Parent, and best fit us to enjoy fellowship with Him, in his natural creation and in his spiritual world. Religion welcomes us to be perfect, as Our Father in heaven is perfect.

PERFECT LIFE THE END OF CHRISTIANITY.

'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'—MATT. vii. 21.

IN these words we have a light to guide us through the intricate paths and imprisoning walls, which perverse ingenuity has reared around the temple of God in man. Here we learn what is central in religion. Here is revealed the immortal good, that Jesus, in his life and death, proposed as his great end.

To do God's will,—duty—moral and religious integrity—rectitude in principle and practice—the love of the Father and of all his intelligent offspring in truth and in deed,—this holds the supreme place of dignity, alike on earth and in heaven. Just in so far as we attain to this, we enter even now the kingdom of heaven. Would that this truth might emerge in full glory, out of the obscurity with which false systems of theology have enveloped it; that it might break through the clouds of mystery, which have so long shrouded it, and shine with sunlike splendour on our souls. Never can God's will be *done* with our whole energy, until we learn that there is nothing in time, nothing in eternity, to be compared with the perfect life.

(1.) By the *Will* of God we understand generally his commands. In the text, Jesus intended particularly the *Precepts* which he was just giving from the Mount; for these words concentrate the spirit of that meritor-

able discourse. The great truth, to which we are led by this passage, and by the whole New Testament, may be expressed in a few words. I affirm, and would maintain, that *excellence of character*—that the religious, social, self-controlling virtue, which is set forth in these precepts, and which pervades the whole teaching of Jesus—is the great object of Christianity, is the great blessing which Christ came to communicate. I affirm that the highest good which he effects is that which works within. His influence on human character is his holiest influence. I insist on this truth,—because, simple as it appears to be, it is not sufficiently understood. The common doctrine is, that Christ came to confer other benefits, and especially to reconcile the offended Deity to his sinful creatures, to shield men from Divine anger and from outward punishment. I believe, on the contrary, that his great end is to work a change within the mind, spirit, character of men, and that the glory of this change constitutes the glory of his office. Virtue, rectitude, purity, love of God, love to man,—in one word, goodness,—this is the great good which flows to us from Jesus Christ. This is the redemption he confers. This truth I would now illustrate.

(i.) That Christ's great purpose is to redeem men from sin and virtue, is the view I meet with perpetually in the *Scriptures*. I meet it everywhere; now in direct assertion, now by implication. I meet it in precept, promise, and parable. 'His name shall be called Jesus,' says the angel; 'for he shall save his people from their sins,'—that is, from vice and moral evil. 'I came,' says Jesus, 'to call men to repentance.' 'God sent him to bless us,' says Peter, 'by turning us from our iniquities.' 'He gave himself for us,' says Paul, 'that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' 'He died for us, that we, dying to sin, may

live unto righteousness.' But it is unnecessary to multiply quotations. What is plainer from the whole New Testament, than that reformation, righteousness, the practice of good works, is the great purpose of our religion. and that whenever this is accomplished, the work of Christianity is done?

(ii.) I pass from the Scriptures to that revelation which always concurs with Scripture,—to *reason*; and I affirm, that from the very nature of God and of his universe, Jesus Christ can communicate no greater good than this virtue,—this rectitude of which I have spoken. And I thus affirm, because this goodness is the highest good which Jesus himself possesses. We hear much controversy and contention respecting Jesus Christ. But I ask you: What was his great distinction? Was it not his spotless virtue? Place Jesus in what rank you will, is it not, after all, the excellence of his *character*,—his disinterestedness—his devotion to great and good ends—his celestial mildness—his stainless purity,—which you count the best of all his endowments? Arm him with power over the universe, but quench his charity, and do you not eclipse his glory? Ascribe to him infinite wisdom, but pervert the rectitude of his will, and do you not even turn such omniscience into a curse alike to himself and to others? What, I ask, does Jesus own, so precious, so glorious, as that virtue which he teaches his disciples? What is it that endears Jesus Christ to his Father? You may learn it from the following passage: 'Jesus said to his disciples: If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.' I beg you to weigh these words. Jesus owed the peculiar love with which he was regarded by God,—he owed his office as the Messiah, and all the power with which he was invested,—to his obedience, to his moral and religious integrity, to his unflinching reverence for goodness. Why was it that he

enjoyed such peculiar communion with God? He says: 'The Father hath not left me alone, because I do always those things which please Him.' *This* was the bond of union between him and his Father. To this perfect rectitude of his will, his reason and his life, he owed not only his mission on earth, but his crown in heaven. Paul assures us, that in recompense of his obedience unto death, he is now enthroned above all power and dignity, both in this world and in the world to come. Thus in heaven, as on earth, Jesus has nothing so precious to bestow as goodness. We talk indeed in popular language of Christ as 'sitting on a throne.' But how worthless would be a throne, though made of heaven's richest treasures, compared with the Godlike charity that reigns within him and constitutes his soul? His real throne is the empire that tried and triumphant virtue gives him in that pure realm. Men talk of the 'brightness' which surrounds him, and of the 'splendour of his form'; but this is only the beaming forth of his spirit. Mere outward radiance is dim when compared with his intellectual and moral perfection. The disputes of Christians about the rank of Christ have turned their minds away from the simple truth taught throughout in the New Testament,—that his unflinching rectitude,—his undeviating obedience,—his divine philanthropy,—his perfect accordance with the will of his Father,—was, and is, and ever will be, his supreme glory and his richest joy; and consequently that he can give nothing more blessed. In bringing us, by his religion, to *do* the will of his Father, he brings us into his own state of happiness and heaven,—brings us to do that, in doing which his own blessedness consists,—brings us into his own kingdom, and shares with us his own throne. For his kingdom is but another name for righteousness, and his throne is the sway that virtue always wields.

(iii.) I urge this topic, because it seems to me that

no error is more common among all sects than the expectation from Christ, of some greater good than virtue and holiness,—than a right spirit towards God and man. But this includes all good. This is to the mind what health is to the body, giving it the enjoyment of all else, bringing it into harmony with God and the Creation, giving it peace within itself. In an important sense, the spring of all happiness is in the mind. True, all happiness is the gift of God. But He gives it through our own spiritual development, gives it as a fruit and recompense of growing purity. No happiness will bloom for us hereafter which has not its germs in our own rectified minds, which does not spring from an inward root of wisdom and of love. Future happiness is not to be a passive good, coming to us from outward sources, a delight which we shall inhale as we now breathe a balmy atmosphere, without a thought or care of our own. Happiness is not to be a stream of pleasure flowing in upon us, whilst we resign ourselves to indolent repose. The happiness of heaven is activity. It is power. It is clear and bright thought, the love of truth, and the love of right. It is strengthening friendship and efficient charity. It is consecration of every energy to God—the perception of beauty in all his works—the offering up of gratitude and praise for ever new and multiplying proofs of his goodness. It is the outflow of our sympathies and attachments, and the communication of noble blessings to our fellow-creatures. By the happiness of heaven I understand the mind, rising, through acts of piety and virtue, to an enlarged, sublime, creative power of thought, such as is faintly shadowed forth by the mightiest efforts of genius upon earth, and to a pure love, of which we have dim presages in the most heroic and self-sacrificing deeds of Heroism recorded in history. The happiness of heaven is moral and religious principle, diffused through and perfecting all our faculties, affections, and energies; and

consequently nothing greater than this principle of goodness can be communicated to us by Jesus Christ through everlasting ages. His highest office consists in thus leading us to do the will of our Father in heaven. In conforming our minds to the Supreme Mind, he gives us the happiness of heaven: nor can it be given in any other way.

From these remarks you learn that I consider righteous action, the *doing of God's will* as the *beginning and end* of Christianity. I regard the precepts of Jesus—which he gave on the Mount, and which he illustrated so gloriously in his life—as the essential element of his religion, and to which all other parts are but subservient. Obey these, and the purpose of his religion is fulfilled in you. Regard these as your rule of life, and you build your house upon a rock. Live them out in deed, and you have entered the kingdom of heaven—you even now enter it. Christ's precepts then—declaring God's will, or *perfect virtue*—are what chiefly concern us. To secure obedience to his precepts is the great aim of all the doctrines, promises, and other teachings of Christ. And to exalt these above the precepts is to prefer the *means* to the *end*.

(2.) It may be said, in reply to these views, that whilst I am inclined to lay the whole stress on obedience and on perfect virtue, the New Testament lays the greatest stress on *faith*. 'To be saved, we must believe,' men say. 'Virtue, purity, sanctity, are not enough. Faith in Christ is the possession which is most to be prized.' I might reply to this, that Paul taught a different doctrine, in that memorable passage where, in comparing faith, hope, and charity, he said, 'the greatest of these is charity.' I waive, however, that reply. I acknowledge the importance of faith. But still I maintain the *supremacy* of virtuous obedience. For what is faith, and what is its use? To believe in

Christ is to receive and cherish those great truths, from which a pure life flows,—by which the mind is strengthened to withstand evil, to overcome inward and outward foes, and to press forward to perfection. The value of faith lies in its power over the character,—in the force of holy purpose, in the enlargement of philanthropy, in the union of the mind to God,—to which it is fitted to exalt us. In other words, faith is a *means*, and obedience is the *end*. What is it to believe in Christ? I answer: It is to believe that he and his religion came from God, and to follow out in practice this conviction. It is to recognize a divine excellence and authority in his precepts, and resolutely to adopt them as our rule of life. It is to see a divine purity in his character, and resolutely to make it our model. It is to be assured that under his guidance we shall attain to perfection, and to forsake all other guides for this inestimable good. It is to believe in the promises which he has made to all forms of holiness; and under this conviction to cultivate all. It is to believe that the pure in heart shall see God: and under this conviction to cleanse the thoughts, imagination, and desires. It is to believe that the merciful shall find mercy, and the forgiving be forgiven; and through this confidence to cherish a placable and affectionate virtue. It is to believe the promise, that if we ask we shall receive; and under this persuasion to seek earnestly God's holy spirit. In a word, faith is to believe, that if we hear and do the words which Jesus spake, we shall be like the man who built his house upon the rock; and in this confidence to *obey*. I know nothing plainer than the true use of faith. It is enjoined wholly for its practical influences simply to aid and strengthen us to resist sin, and to encourage us to frame ourselves after that perfection of character which shines forth in the precepts and example of Jesus.

(3.) Again, it is a common opinion, that, *love* to

Christ has some special efficacy, that by this some higher end is accomplished in securing salvation than by a general obedience of his laws. Far be it from me to chill, in the slightest degree, the affection with which Christ is regarded. I feel that he has not yet received from men the love which he deserves. Deeply should I rejoice to set forth with a new power his claims to our reverent esteem and joyful gratitude. But let not this regard to Christ be misunderstood. Especially let it not be separated in our thoughts from obedience to his precepts, or be exalted in our esteem above general rectitude. The truth is, the love of Christ is but another name for the love of virtue. It is not, as some seem to think, a kind of theological emotion—a mysterious fervour—distinct from moral integrity, from philanthropy and from our duties to God and our neighbour. We err grievously if we imagine that our salvation is promoted by occasional ardour towards Christ, which subsists apart by itself in the heart,—which does not blend with our ordinary feelings and our daily lives. The character of Christ is perfect virtue. And consequently attachment to Christ, as I have just said, is but another name for attachment to virtue.

In this consists the excellence of love of Jesus, that it is a love of the purest, loveliest, sublimest manifestation of moral excellence, and is our surest guide to the attainment of it. To love Jesus Christ is to love him, in whom human virtue was revealed in its perfection, and who came that he might communicate to us what was most perfect in his own mind. It is to love disinterestedness, self-sacrifice, and an unbounded charity. It is to love a will wholly purified from selfishness, and entirely consecrated to the will and loving purposes of God. It is to love calmness, constancy, fortitude and magnanimity. It is to love a spirit raised above the world, its frowns, its flatteries, its opinions, its prejudices, its most dreaded pains. It is to love him who

gave himself for us, that he might rescue us from all sin, and present us spotless to God. Who does not see then, that the love of Christ is one and the same, with a consecration to what is good and great—with the desire of perfection—with entire devotedness to doing God's will.

(4.) I am aware that the importance which I have now attached to the precepts of Christianity must shock the common prejudice,—that the distinguishing excellence of the Gospel lies in its *peculiar doctrines*. The doctrines of Christianity I should be the last to undervalue. But I maintain that these doctrines all bear directly on its precepts, and are all designed to teach the supreme worth of Christian virtue. In this all their significance consists. Let me descend to a few particulars.

I am told by some Christians, that the doctrine of immortality is the grand discovery of Christianity, and gives it its chief value. But, I ask, why is immortality revealed? And I answer, it is revealed wholly as a motive to obedience. The future state, which Jesus Christ brought to light, is a state of equitable retribution, where those who do good will rise to glory and honour and peace, and those who do evil to shame, tribulation, and anguish. To believe in immortality is to believe in the everlasting triumph and growth of virtue; and under this conviction to choose it as our supreme good.

Again, some Christians will tell me that the doctrine of divine forgiveness is the great glory of Christianity. But, I ask, to whom is divine forgiveness promised? To *all* indiscriminately? Did Christ publish from his cross absolute, unconditional pardon? Who does not know that throughout the whole teaching of the New Testament, repentance and remission of sins are always combined, and that the last is invariably used as a motive for the first? Who is forgiven in Christianity?

The Prodigal! Yes! But not whilst wasting his substance in riotous living; but when, heart-broken, conscious-struck, he returns to his father's house. Our Father's pardon was promised by Jesus to such as forsake sin, and obey his will: and this obedience is the end for which divine forgiveness is preached.

Again, some Christians may tell me that the doctrine of salvation is the great doctrine of Christianity, — more important than all its precepts, and of more worth than all its incitements to virtue. Salvation is a sublime doctrine. But what does it mean? According to the Scriptures, salvation is to be rescued from moral evil, from error and sin, from the diseases of the mind, and to be restored to inward truth, piety, and virtue. Consequently, salvation and Christian obedience are one and the same. Nor indeed can salvation be anything else. I know but one salvation for a sick man, and that is to give him *health*. So I know but one salvation for a bad man, and that is to make him truly, thoroughly, conscientiously *good*, — to break the chains of his evil habits, to raise him to the dignity and peace of a true, religious life. An intelligent and moral being is saved and blessed just so far as he chooses freely — fully — what is good, great, and god-like; as he adopts for his rule the will of God. I therefore repeat it. Salvation and virtue are but different aspects of the same supreme good. But now I go one step further, and reach the very citadel of controversy.

(5.) There are Christians who will tell me there is one principle of the Gospel which constitutes its very essence, to which I have not even alluded; and which is of more importance to the human race than all Christ's precepts combined. This is *redemption by the blood of the cross*. This atonement, we are told, is the grand distinction of the Gospel; and all other parts of Christianity hold but a subordinate place. 'The cross! the cross! is the centre of our religion,' they say, 'round

which the precepts and the promises revolve, and from which all borrow light and life.' To 'trust in the cross' has a more immediate and important influence on our salvation, than to carry out in life, however perfectly, all precepts of the Sermon on the Mount.

To this I reply, that I prize the cross and blood of Christ as highly as any Christian can. In view of that cross I desire ever to live; and of that blood, in the *spiritual sense*, I desire ever to drink. I hope, as truly as any Christian ever did or could, to be saved by the cross of Christ. But what do I mean by such language? Do I expect that the *wood* to which Christ was nailed is to save me? Do I expect that the *material* blood which trickled from his wounds is to save me? Or do I expect this boon from his bodily agonies? No! By the cross and blood of Christ, I mean nothing outward, nothing material. I mean the spirit, the character, the love of Jesus, which his death made manifest, and which are pre-eminently fitted to bind me to him, and to make me a partaker of his virtues. I mean his religion, which was sealed by his blood, and the spirit of which shone forth most gloriously from his cross. I mean the great principles for which he died, and which have for their sole end to purify human nature.

According to these views, the blood and cross of Christ are the means of Christian virtue. How then can they be exalted above that virtue? I am astonished and appalled by the gross manner in which 'Christ's blood' is often spoken of, as if his outward wounds and bodily sufferings could contribute to our salvation; as if aught else than his spirit, his truth, could redeem us. On other occasions, we use the very words which we thus apply to Christ, and use them rationally. How is it that in religion we so readily part with our *common sense*? For example, we often say that our liberty was purchased, and our country was saved, 'by the blood of patriots.' And what do we mean?—that the material

blood which gushed from their bodies, that their wounds, that their agonies, saved their country? No! We mean that we owe our freedom to men who loved their country more than life, and gladly shed their blood in its defence. By their blood we mean their patriotism,—their devotion to freedom,—approved in death. We mean their generous heroism, of which death was the crown. We mean the principles for which they died, the spirit which shone forth in their self-sacrifice, and which this sacrifice of their lives spread abroad and strengthened in the community. So by Christ's blood I understand his spirit, his entire devotion to the cause of human virtue and to the will of God. By his cross I mean his celestial love,—I mean the great principles of piety and righteousness,—in asserting which he died. To be redeemed by his blood is to be redeemed by his goodness. In other words, it is to be purified from all sin, and restored to all virtue, by the principles, the religion, the character, the all-conquering love of Jesus Christ. According to these views, moral purity, Christian virtue, spiritual perfection, is the supreme good to be bestowed by the blood and cross of Christ. O! that a voice of power could send this simple yet most sublime truth to the utmost bounds of Christendom! It is a truth mournfully and disastrously obscured. According to common views, the death of Christ, instead of being the great *quickener* of heroic virtue, is made a *substitute* for it; and many hope to be happy through Christ's dying agony, much more than through the participation of his self-sacrificing life. I doubt whether any error has done so much to rob Christianity of its purifying and ennobling power as these false views of atonement. The cross of Jesus—when supposed to bless us by some mysterious agency of reconciling God to us, and not by transforming our characters into the spirit and image of our Saviour—becomes our peril, and may prove our ruin. Of one

reality I am sure, and I speak it with entire confidence: I cannot receive from the cross of Christ any good so great as that sublime spirit of *self-sacrifice*, of love to God, and of unbounded charity, which the cross so gloriously manifested. And they who seek not this, but seek, as they imagine, some mystical and mysterious good, from Christ's death, are mournfully blinded to the chief end of Christianity. I speak thus strongly,—not in arrogance, not in uncharitableness,—but because a great truth, felt deeply cannot utter itself feebly and tamely; because no language less emphatic would be just to the strongest convictions of my conscience, my reason, and my heart.

My friends, I have stated in this discourse the great good which Jesus Christ came to spread through the earth—the highest benefit which he can confer. I know nothing of equal worth with moral excellence; with an enlightened, powerful, disinterested and holy mind; with a love to God which changes us into his likeness. I know nothing so important to us as the perfection of our own spirits. Perfect goodness is the supreme good, may I not say *the only good*? We often hear, indeed, of the rewards of virtue, as if they were something separate from virtue, and virtue was but the means. But I am sure that virtue itself is worth more than all outward rewards; its truest recompense is found in *itself*, in its own growing vigour, in its own native peace, in the harmony which it establishes between our souls and God, in the sympathy and friendship by which it identifies us with the universe. So we hear of the punishments of sin as if they were the greatest evils to be dreaded. But sin, I am sure, is *itself* more terrible than all its consequences, more terrible than any hell; and its chief misery is bound up in its own hateful nature. Of course, the only redemption of a human being is the recovery of his spirit from moral evil, from whatever stains and debases it, to the

purity, philanthropy, piety, and perfectness of a child of God, such as was manifested in the beloved son. .

To do the will of our heavenly Father,—to form ourselves after the purest ideal of goodness, which nature, conscience, revelation present as a pattern,—is the great work of earthly existence. . This practical use of the Gospel is the only saving faith in Jesus Christ. For we know him and believe in him, only in so far as we recognize, love and imitate the perfection of his character and life. To prefer universal rectitude, the boundless love of God and fellow-beings, *the perfect life*, before all other good, is the only true wisdom, is the only real worship. We know nothing of a future world unless we hear proceeding from it a voice of benediction, that warns and welcomes us to enter now into that purity, integrity, charity, holiness, peace and joy, which are the bliss of heaven.

BRIEF EXTRACTS
FROM DR. CHANNING'S WORKS.

'THE attempt to find infallible records in canonical books, and permanent standards of truth in ecclesiastical votes, has so hopelessly failed that honest persistence in it has become impossible to instructed persons; and therefore, in all competent guides and teachers of men, a continual sanction and profession of it is not simply an intellectual error, but a breach of veracity. And this tampering with sincerity on the part of instructors who know better than they choose to say, not only arrests the advance to higher truth, but eat, like a canker, into the morals of our time.'—JAMES MARTINEAU.

[*Written in reply to an Address on the occasion of Dr. Martineau's Ninetieth Birthday, April 21st, 1895.*]

BRIEF EXTRACTS.

HOW GOD REVEALS HIMSELF TO MAN.

• We call God a Mind. He has revealed Himself as a Spirit. But what do we know of mind but through the unfolding of this principle in our own breasts? That unbounded spiritual energy which we call God is conceived by us only through consciousness, through the knowledge of ourselves.—We ascribe thought or intelligence to the Deity, as one of ~~the~~ most glorious attributes. And what means this language? These terms we have framed to express operations or faculties of our own souls. The Infinite Light would be for ever hidden from us did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us.

• The same is true of God's goodness. How do we understand this but by the principle of love implanted in the human breast? Whence is it that this divine attribute is so faintly comprehended, but from the feeble development of it in the multitude of men? Who can understand the strength, purity, fulness, and extent of divine philanthropy, but he in whom selfishness has been swallowed up in love?

• The same is true of all the moral perfections of the Deity. • These are comprehended by us only through our own moral nature. It is conscience within us which, by its approving and condemning voice, interprets to us

God's love of virtue and hatred of sin; and without conscience, these glorious conceptions would never have opened on the mind. It is the lawgiver in our own breasts which gives us the idea of divine authority, and binds us to obey it. The soul, by its sense of right, or its perception of moral distinctions, is clothed with sovereignty over itself, and through this alone it understands and recognizes the Sovereign of the Universe.--*Likeness to God.*

TRACES OF DIVINITY IN MAN.

I CANNOT but pity the man who recognizes nothing godlike in his own nature. I see the marks of God in the heavens and the earth, but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong, and which never despairs of the cause of Christ and human virtue. I do and I must reverence human nature. Neither the sneers of a worldly scepticism, nor the groans of a gloomy theology, disturb my faith in its godlike powers and tendencies. I know how it is despised, how it has been oppressed, how civil and religious establishments have for ages conspired to crush it. I know its history. I shut my eyes on none of its weaknesses and crimes. I understand the proofs by which despotism demonstrates that man is a wild beast, in want of a master. and only safe in chains. But injured, trampled on, and scorned as our nature is, I still turn to it with intense sympathy and strong hope. The signatures of its origin and its end are impressed too deeply to be ever wholly effaced. I bless it for its kind affections, for its strong and tender love. I honour it for its struggles against oppression, for its growth and progress under the weight of so many chains and prejudices, for its achievements in science and art, and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly

virtue. These are marks of a divine origin, and the pledges of a celestial inheritance.—*Likeness to God*.

ON WHAT DOES RELIGION REST?

THE main ground of the obligation of being religious, I fear, is not understood among the multitude of Christians. Ask them why they must know and worship God? and I fear that, were the heart to speak, the answer would be, because He can do with us what He will, and consequently our first concern is to secure his favour. Religion is a calculation of interest, a means of safety. God is worshipped too often on the same principle on which flattery and personal attentions are lavished on human superiors, and the worshipper cares not how abjectly he bows, if he may win to his side the power which he cannot resist. I look with deep sorrow on this common perversion of the highest principle of the soul. God is not to be worshipped because He has much to give, for on this principle a despot who should be munificent to his slaves would merit homage. He is not to be adored for mere power; for power, when joined with selfishness and crime, ought to be withstood; and the greater the might of an evil agent the holier and loftier is the spirit which will not bend to him. True religion is the worship of a perfect being, who is the author of perfection to those who adore him. On this ground, and on no other, religion rests.—*The Great Purpose of Christianity*.

THE SENSE OF DUTY.

THE sense of duty is the greatest gift of God. The idea of right is the primary and the highest revelation of God to the human mind and all outward revelations are founded on and addressed to it. All mysteries of science and theology fade away before the grandeur

of the simple perception of duty, which dawns on the mind of the little child. That perception brings him into the moral kingdom of God. That lays on him an everlasting bond. He in whom the conviction of duty is unfolded, becomes subject from that moment to a law which no power in the universe can abrogate. He forms a new and indissoluble connection with God, that of an accountable being. He begins to stand before an inward tribunal, on the decisions of which his whole happiness rests; he hears a voice which, if faithfully followed, will guide him to perfection, and in neglecting which he brings upon himself inevitable misery. We little understand the solemnity of the moral principle in every human mind. We think not how awful are its functions. We forget that it is the germ of immortality. — *Honour due to all men.*

THE RIGHT OF MAN TO JUDGE FOR HIMSELF.

WE are presumptuous, we are told, in judging of our Creator. But He himself has made this our duty, in giving us a moral faculty; and to decline it is to violate the primary law of our nature. Conscience, the sense of right, the power of perceiving moral distinctions, the power of discerning between justice and injustice, excellence and baseness, is the highest faculty given us by God, the whole foundation of our responsibility, and our sole capacity for religion. Now, we are forbidden by this faculty to love a being who wants, or who fails to discover, moral excellence. God, in giving us conscience, has implanted a principle within us which forbids us to prostrate ourselves before mere power, or to offer praise where we do not discover worth; a principle which challenges our supreme homage for supreme goodness, and which absolves us from guilt, when we abhor a severe and unjust administration. He rests his authority on the perfect coincidence of his

will and government with those great and fundamental principles of morality written on our souls.—*The Moral Argument against Calvinism.*

GREATNESS.

THE greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms and most fearless under men's and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.

The true greatness of human life is almost wholly out of sight. Perhaps in our presence, the most heroic deed on earth is done in some silent spirit, the loftiest purpose cherished, the most generous sacrifice made, and we do not suspect it. I believe this greatness to be most common among the multitude, whose names are never heard. . . Among common people will be found more of hardship borne manfully, more of unvarnished truth, more of religious trust, more of that generosity which gives what the giver needs himself, and more of a wise estimate of life and death, than among the more prosperous.—*Self-culture.*

PRAYER.

PRAYER gives intensity to the consciousness of our connection with God,—lifts us out of our narrowness into communion with the Infinite,—teaches us to regard our interests as embraced within the immense designs of Providence,—opens to us a view of our relations to the universe and all spirits. We come to Him who has the well-being of all creatures in his control, in whom the whole good of the universe is concentrated: can we approach him absorbed in selfish wants? We come to the Spiritual Father, who desires our perfection, whose law of rectitude is immutable, whose will of goodness

is supreme, who abhors evil. Must not every desire become purified in such a presence? God always regards us in our connections with other beings; every gift bestowed upon us, or withheld from us, will affect them as well as us: should not our petition be, then, to receive only what the Universal Father sees to be best for all as for ourselves? The true spirit of prayer is a submission of ourselves to the good of the whole, to the purposes of Infinite Love.—*Life.*

LOVE TO CHRIST.

OTHERS may love Christ for mysterious attributes; I love him for the rectitude of his soul and his life. I love him for that benevolence which went through Judea, instructing the ignorant, healing the sick, giving sight to the blind. I love him for that universal charity which comprehended the despised publican, the hated Samaritan, the benighted heathen, and sought to bring a world to God and to happiness. I love him for that gentle, mild, forbearing spirit, which no insult, outrage, injury could overpower; and which desired as earnestly the repentance and happiness of its foes as the happiness of its friends. I love him for the spirit of magnanimity, constancy, and fearless rectitude with which, amidst peril and opposition, he devoted himself to the work which God gave him to do. I love him for the wise and enlightened zeal with which he espoused the true, the spiritual interests of mankind, and through which he lived and died to redeem them from every sin, to frame them after his own godlike virtue. I love him, I have said, for his moral excellence; I know nothing else to love.—*Love to Christ.*

UNIVERSALITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

WHEN I examine the doctrines, precepts, and spirit of Christianity, I discover, in them all, this character

of universality. I discover nothing narrow, temporary, local. The Gospel bears the stamp of no particular age or country. It does not concern itself with the perishable interests of communities or individuals; but appeals to the spiritual, immortal, unbounded principle in human nature. Its aim is to direct the mind to the Infinite Being, and to an infinite good. It is not made up, like other religions, of precise forms and details; but it inculcates immutable and all-comprehending principles of duty, leaving every man to apply them for himself to the endless variety of human conditions. It separates from God the partial, limited views of Judaism and heathenism, and holds Him forth in the sublime attributes of the Universal Father. In like manner it inculcates philanthropy without exceptions or bounds; a love to man as man, a love founded on that immortal nature of which all men partake, and which binds us to recognize in each a child of God and a brother. The spirit of bigotry, which confines its charity to a sect, and the spirit of aristocracy, which looks on the multitude as an inferior race, are alike rebuked by Christianity; which, eighteen hundred years ago, in a narrow and superstitious age, taught, what the present age is beginning to understand, that all men are essentially equal, and that all are to be honoured, because made for immortality and endued with capacities of ceaseless improvement.—*Christianity a Rational Religion.*

HELL.—HERE. AND HEREAFTER.

• LET us not listen for a moment to a doctrine so irrational as that our present characters do not follow us into a future world. If we are to live again, let us settle it as a sure fact, that we shall carry with us our present minds, such as we now make them; that we shall reap good or ill according to their improvement or

corruption ; and, of consequence, that every act which affects character will reach in its influence beyond the grave, and have a bearing on our future weal or woe. We are now framing our future lot. He who does a bad deed says, more strongly than words can utter, 'I cast away a portion of future good, I resolve on future pain.'

For myself, I see no need of a local hell for the sinner after death. When I reflect how, in the present world, a guilty mind has power to deform the countenance, to undermine health, to poison pleasure, to darken the fairest scenes of nature, to turn prosperity into a curse, I can easily understand how, in the world to come, sin, working without obstruction, according to its own nature, should spread the gloom of a dungeon over the whole creation, and wherever it goes should turn the universe into a hell.—*The Evil of Sin.*

HEAVEN—HERE AND HEREAFTER.

WE must not think of heaven as a stationary community. I think of it as a world of stupendous plans and efforts for its own improvement. I think of it as a society passing through successive stages of development, virtue, knowledge, power, by the energy of its own members. Celestial genius is always active to explore the great laws of the creation and the everlasting principles of the mind, to disclose the beautiful in the universe, and to discover the means by which every soul may be carried forward. In that world, as in this, there are diversities of intellect, and the highest minds find their happiness and progress in elevating the less improved. There the work of education, which began here, goes on without end, and a diviner philosophy than is taught on earth reveals the spirit to itself, and awakens it to earnest, joyful effort for its own perfection.

• Dream not of a heaven into which you may enter, live here as you may. To such as waste the present state the future will not, cannot bring happiness. There is no concord between them and that world of purity. A human being who has lived without God, and without self-improvement, can no more enjoy heaven than a moulder- ing body, lifted from the tomb and placed amidst beautiful prospects, can enjoy the light through its decayed eyes, or feel the balmy air which blows away its dust. Immortality is a glorious doctrine; but not given us for speculation or amusement. Its happiness is to be realized only through our own struggles with ourselves, only through our own reaching forward to new virtue and piety. To be joined with Christ in heaven, we must be joined with him now in spirit, in the conquest of temptation, in charity and well-doing. Immortality should begin here. The seed is now to be sown which is to expand for ever. 'Be not weary then in well-doing; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.'—*The Future Life*.

THE REVOLUTION NEEDED.

I SEE more and more distinctly, that society needs a revolution such as history nowhere records. *To rise above others* is the spirit and soul of society in its present constitution. But *to help others rise*, to use our superiority as the means of elevating those below, is the spirit of Christianity and humanity; and were it to prevail, it would make a revolution more striking than any conquest has made.—*Channing-Aiken Correspondence*.

THE COMING TIME.

• MIGHTY powers are at work in the world. Who can stay them? God's word has gone forth, and 'it cannot return to him void.' A new comprehension of

the Christian spirit,—a new reverence for humanity, a new feeling of brotherhood, and of all men's relation to the common Father,—this is among the signs of our times. We see it; do we not feel it? Before this all oppressions are to fall. Society, silently pervaded by this, is to change its aspect of universal warfare for peace. The power of selfishness, all-grasping and seemingly invincible, is to yield to this diviner energy. The song of angels, 'On Earth Peace,' will not always sound as fiction. O come, thou kingdom of heaven, for which we daily pray! Come, Friend and Saviour of the race, who didst shed thy blood on the cross to reconcile man to man, and earth to heaven! Come, ye predicted ages of righteousness and love, for which the faithful have so long yearned. Come, Father Almighty, and crown with thine omnipotence the humble strivings of thy children to subvert oppression and wrong, to spread light and freedom, peace and joy, the truth and spirit of thy Son, through the whole earth! (*His last words in public August 1, 1842.*)

DR. CHANNING'S NOTE BOOK.¹

ASPIRATION.—Let it be our happiness this day to add to the happiness of those around, to comfort some sorrow, to relieve some want, to add some strength to our neighbour's virtue. Let the employment of this day leave no sorrow, no remembrance of wrong, at night, but may it be holy and profitable, blessed and innocent.

CHILDREN.—Do not judge of a child's pleasures by your own feelings." A disappointment, trifling to ourselves, may be an infinite evil to the little being whose soul is wrapped up in the pleasure removed. A child's plan should be respected. How cautious should a parent be that his children never have reason to suspect or distrust him!

CHRISTIANITY.—I am sure Christianity will endure, because it is founded on man's nature,—answers to his deepest wants, his essential and noblest wants. I do not say that what we now call Christianity will live for ever. I think not,—I hope not. Worlds would not tempt me to bend my mind to the yoke which Christians here bear. I owe too much to intellectual liberty.

CONSCIENCE.—I am to live listening to the voice in my own soul, and to no other but as sanctioned by this. It is more important to me to preserve an unblemished conscience than to compass any object, be it ever so great. The dying of conscience is the departing of God.

¹ These brief extracts are taken from a little volume of *Passages from the Unpublished Manuscripts of Dr. Channing*, selected by his grand-daughter, Grace Ellery Channing, published in 1887.

CONVERSATION.—When we consider that the essence of human society is communication of thought, it will be hard to find a vice more hostile to society than falsehood, or the perversion and confusion of those signs by which men agree to communicate their thought. Our conversation should do good by its general spirit, not by its anxious confinement to the most edifying subject.

DUTY.—People should see that we expect much from them. We should in nothing let down the law of duty. But this should be done not rigidly, sternly, unfeelingly. It should be an expression of our respect for their nature, and should tend to awaken *self*-respect. To live in violation of a duty we might know is akin to the guilt of living in opposition to a known duty.

FELLOWSHIP.—We must feel that we never receive so much as when we impart, for what we give comes back richer, more precious. We throw into spiritual circulation what will flow again through our own souls. To live with the world, and know the worst of it,—and yet hope and strive for its improvement, taking courage from God,—how much nobler than to dream of the millenium in our closets!

FREEDOM.—If there be one interest dear to me on earth, it is the freedom of the human mind. If I have found my existence a growing good, if I have gained any large views of religion or my own nature I know nothing to which, under God, I am so indebted as to my freedom. This has been breath of life to me.

FRIENDSHIP.—True friendship, founded on moral qualities, is utterly inconsistent with a partial exclusive, unsocial attachment to a few. I do not love my friend unless I am sensible to his excellence when manifested in others, and unless I am attached to the cause of universal virtue. Sincerity, truth, faithfulness, come into the very essence of friendship.

GENIUS.—That is a work of genius which partakes of the eternal and the unchanging, which is not local or

temporary, but becomes the principle, the key, the illumination, the soul of the mutable and passing events, which arrests us, which associates itself with all we see, and is confirmed by the development of time and our own nature. Genius is seen not so much in paradox, as in its living, renovating, freshening conception of a plain truth.

HAPPINESS.—We begin by expecting happiness from something outward. This is the delusion of childhood and of the infancy of human races. The progress of the mind consists in nothing so much as in the development of the consciousness that happiness has its seat and foundation *within*. Till we learn this we are ignorant indeed. There is no religion in being unhappy.

HUMANITY.—The lowest, most ignorant man is to be treated with respect. Not because we are worthless, but because we are so noble. Our own development of powers should only awaken a livelier concern towards those in whom the divine ray slumbers. To give a generous hope to man of his own nature, is to enrich him immeasurably.

HUMILITY.—The humility which comes from studying our own defects is in danger of abjectness. True humility is forgetfulness of self, in the sense of the great, the divine. The soul is humbled by its loftiness. The greater a man is, the less he is disposed to show his greatness. True nobility of soul rises above and suppresses the love of show.

LOVE.—True love has a character of confidence, boldness, freedom in social intercourse. Having no private aims, it is frank. Having no selfish fear of opinion, it does justice to its convictions. Individual affection always favours the freedom of its object. It loves him as an individual. It does not wish to break down his peculiarities. A virtuous attachment to another is to ourselves and that other a great thing.

NATURE.—The blue sky, the green fields, the hue and fragrance of flowers, the splendour of the rising and

setting sun, and of the stars,—how deeply do they work in the wise and pure soul! What springs of thought and emotion do they unfold, and how much of the happiness of the happiest may be traced to these influences! The eye and the ear may become to us almost perpetual inlets of purifying pleasure, and the senses which at first chained us to this world may unlock with magical art infinite prospects beyond the world.

PEACE.—There is indeed a peace on earth, but it is not the peace of inaction, of prosperity. It is the peace of him who accepts the conditions on which life is given—who girds himself for the conflict—who has a clear, strong faith that conflict is wisely ordered, and who has an earnest, in the energy it calls forth, of the perfection of his soul and the triumph of a higher world. There is no peace but in subduing the enemies of the soul.

PUNISHMENT.—Who suffers most from sin? The sinner himself;—one would think then that sin would be most hated *for his sake*. Infinite, endless punishment, would make Hell the most interesting spot in the universe. All the sympathies of Heaven would be turned towards it.

WISDOM.—There are impressions, feelings, convictions, which cannot be defended by particular arguments, but which are the results of a whole life, which represent the whole past experience, in which the whole nature is represented,—the reason, heart, conscience, imagination. Is not this Wisdom? Wisdom is not afraid to see evil in all its strength, for it looks far enough to discern the omnipotence of the antagonist power.

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